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OF THE LATE

REV. ALEXANDER PROUDFIT, D.D.,

WITH

SELECTIONS FROM HIS DIARY AND CORRESPONDENCE,
AND RECOLLECTIONS OF HIS LIFE, &c.,
BY HIS SON.

BY JOHN FORSYTH, D.D.,
MINISTER OF UNION CHURCH, NEWBURGH.

Κεφαλὴ δε πάσης ἀρετῆς και κορυφὴ των κατορθωμάτων ἐστιν ἡ προσευχῆς προσκαρτέρησις· δι ἡς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς ἀρετὰς διὰ της παρὰ Θεῦ αἰτήσεως ὁσημέραι κτᾶσθαι δυνάμεθα.
Macarii Opuscula, De Custod. Cordis, p. 8.

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PREFACE.

The following pages have been prepared for the press in the hope that they will minister to the edification of the Church of God, by exhibiting the labours of love and the inward experience of one who, during a long life, gave living evidence of the power and preciousness of the Gospel of Christ. "The memorials of the good," it has been well said, "constitute one of the most sacred possessions of the Church of God;" of such memorials there is no great danger of an undue increase, especially if the subjects of them have been distinguished among the good for their activity in any of the various walks of Christian usefulness, or for their patient endurance of suffering and trials, for their active or their passive virtues. Every such record is a fresh proof of the reality of religion, a new monument of the rich grace of Christ, attesting that the same Lord over all, whose grace abounded to saints of former days, is still equally rich to

all who call upon him. On this ground, the author of this memoir thinks that no apology is needed for his adding another to the many volumes of Christian biography.

The last chapter, consisting of Dr. Proudfit's life, and an account of his last moments, is from the pen of his son, the Rev. Dr. Proudfit, of Rutger's College. It cannot fail to be read with peculiar interest. The author would only add that the selections from the diary and correspondence of Dr. Proudfit have been made, partly for the illustration of his character, and partly with reference to their supposed interest to the Christian reader. Whether they have been made too profusely or too scantily is a point which must be determined by others. Having, as he humbly trusts, undertaken the work from a desire to promote the glory of Christ and the good of his Church, he submits it to his fellow-Christians, praying that it may stimulate all who read it to greater diligence in "the work of faith, and the labour of love, and the patience of hope."

MEMOIR OF THE

REV. ALEXANDER PROUDFIT, D.D.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION.

The town of Salem is situated in one of the loveliest valleys of Northern New-York. The village stands upon a plain of moderate extent, through which flows a small but beautiful stream, the White Creek, so called from the singular clearness of its waters; while on all sides, except towards the south, it is skirted by hills, covered with the luxuriant foliage of our primitive forests, whose rich and varied colours constitute one of the most peculiar glories of an American autumn. Away in the east are to be seen the lofty summits of the Green Mountains of Vermont. In approaching the village from the south, and when, at the distance of about four miles, the first glimpse of it is obtained, one can scarcely avoid the impression that it is most fitly named *Salem;* for the eye rests upon a scene of rich and quiet rural beauty scarcely to be surpassed,

and which will remind the observer of Goldsmith's fine description of

"The loveliest village of the plain."

Here it was, that Doctor Alexander Proudfit lived and laboured as a Christian pastor for almost half a century. The physical beauties just adverted to, by which he was surrounded, appear to have given a tinge to his character, which displayed itself in his conversation and his writings, in the delight with which he pointed out the evidences of divine wisdom and goodness furnished by the manifold productions of the vegetable world, and in the frequency with which the illustrations in his sermons were drawn from the objects and occupations of rural life.

He was the fourth son of the Reverend James Proudfit, respecting whom we have been enabled to gather a few particulars, chiefly from a memoir of him which appeared in the Christian Magazine, and was written by his son. Mr. James Proudfit was born near the town of Perth (Scotland) in 1732. Having from his childhood evinced a serious turn, he was early destined by his parents for the holy ministry. After completing the usual course of study at the University, he entered upon the study of theology under the venerable and Reverend Alexander Moncreif of Abernethy, and in 1753 he was licensed

to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Perth. About this time very pressing applications were made to the Associate Synod in Scotland, for ministerial aid from various parts of these then British colonies. Mr. Proudfit was early chosen by the Synod as one whose great prudence and zeal eminently fitted him for the work of preaching the gospel in the New World, and he was accordingly ordained to the ministry in 1754, with a destination to North America. Shortly before his departure he had the offer of a pastoral charge in the city of Glasgow; his nearest relatives were strongly opposed to his leaving his native land, and looked upon the step as an utter abandonment of all his worldly prospects. His sister, when she saw him embark, threw herself upon the ground in wild and despairing grief; but he was inflexible in pursuing the path to which he felt himself called by the providence of God, and the voice of his church. He could say literally, "I have left all, and followed thee." Nor had he ever reason to repent the step he took; for to him, and to his descendants has the promise of Christ been fulfilled, of an abundant reward even in this present world. He reached Boston in September, 1754, and after itinerating for some years, planting and watering congregations, he accepted a call from the Scottish Presbyterian congregation of Pequa, Pennsyl-

vania. In this charge he continued for a period of twenty-four years, when he was called by the congregation of Salem to succeed the late eminently excellent Dr. Thomas Clark. This call he accepted, and removed to Salem in the autumn of 1783, where he remained until his decease on the 22d of October, 1802, in the seventieth year of his age, and fiftieth of his ministry.

"Rarely," says his son, "has any person occupying a public station, either civil or ecclesiastical, passed through a long life with fewer enemies. His disposition, amiable and unassuming by nature, and doubly so by an uncommon measure of that wisdom which is pure and peaceable, disarmed opposition, and few have possessed a larger share in the esteem and affection of all with whom he was associated. Indeed, lowliness of mind, gentleness of natural temper, extraordinary self-denial, and mortification to the world, may be considered as constituting the distinguishing features of his character. I recollect as I was walking with the Reverend Mr. ——, who had been for many years a companion and fellow-labourer in the Gospel, referring to Mr. Proudfit, he said, 'that, if the degrees of glory corresponded with the degrees of grace, Mr. Proudfit must possess an exalted seat in the everlasting kingdom, for he was the holiest man

he had ever known.' His public discourses possessed much of the natural gentleness of his disposition, and resembled more the genial rains and dews which distil softly on the earth, refreshing and fertilizing it, than those rude storms by which the elements are agitated, and the order of nature disturbed. Owing to this, his ministry was probably more honoured for the edification of saints, than for the alarm and conviction of sinners. He had an almost unbounded acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures; such was the promptness with which he could specify the book, and the chapter, and verse in which any portion of divine truth might be found, that he was usually denominated *the Concordance* by his brethren in the ministry; and when any in the company were at a loss where to find a particular passage, reference was immediately made to him." His anticipations of heaven, at the near approach of death, are said to have been very remarkable; a visible glory seemed to surround him, and he asked those who were about his bed if they could not see it.

Alexander Moncreif, the subject of this memoir, was born at Pequa, in November, 1770. Of his early years, he has himself left no written memorials;* but a few of the companions of

* Among the few reminiscences which his childish years had enabled him to retain of the Revolutionary War, during the whole of

his youth, some of whom were for many years associated with him as office-bearers in the congregation of Salem, still survive, and from them we learn that he was, in his boyhood, distinguished among his fellows for a spirit of activity and resolution, and for his great delight in those more active sports which indicate exuberant vivacity and animal spirits. Some of his boyish adventures and hairbreadth escapes are still mentioned by these early friends.

In his thirteenth year he removed with his father's family to Salem, and soon after began the study of the ancient languages under the tuition of a Mr. Thomas Watson. In a history of the town of Salem, written a few years before his death, he states, "the classical school opened in this place was among the earliest, if not the very first one, established north or west of Albany. This was commenced about the year

which he resided at Pequa, he used to relate that his father's family, and that of the Reverend Mr. Smith, their near neighbour, had once been greatly terrified by hearing, late in the night, the distant tramp of horses. They concluded that it must be a foraging party of British cavalry, who often behaved on these occasions with great cruelty. After a brief consultation, both families fled through the rear of their dwellings, and betook themselves to the woods, where they lay concealed until the next morning. The first scouts, however, whom they sent out to reconnoitre, found that the light horse, whom their affrighted imaginations had conjured up, were no other than a company of colts from their own farmyards, whose gambols had caused their alarm, and the loss of their night's rest.

1782, for the education of a few youths, self-devoted to the sacred ministry, and was superintended by a Mr. Thomas Watson, a gentleman originally from Scotland, and profound in his literary attainments, particularly in the Latin and Greek languages. In the autumn of '83 I had the honour of becoming one of his pupils. After walking the distance of nearly three miles through snows, often two and three feet deep, we had no other accommodation for our school than a house constructed of logs, without, so far as I recollect, a single pane of glass entire." Excellent as was his teacher, and it deserves to be mentioned that under him the good basis of accurate scholarship was laid, his educational advantages must have been comparatively limited, as the town of Salem had not been long settled, and its inhabitants, like those of other parts of Washington county, had been compelled, during the war, for a time to desert their homes. In his later days he used to speak of the few and meager school books then in use, as contrasted with the greatly multiplied and various helps, enjoyed by the young student of the present day. At the same time, he doubted, and we believe justly, whether this great increase in the facilities of learning does not tend to diminish the freedom and vigour of the youthful mind itself. It may be added in this connexion, that

he was strongly of opinion, that the early years should be chiefly given to spontaneous growth and development, and that nature must not be disturbed in this process by the officious system, whose constant tendency is to educate too soon, and too much. Mr. Watson's school, as already stated, was some two miles or more from his father's house, and he was often obliged to go to it through snow two or three feet deep; to this circumstance he was accustomed to ascribe much of the vigour of his constitution in after years. "Wet feet," he often said, "were little thought of in those days." His physical frame, though slight, was one of uncommon vigour, and capable of enduring, even in old age, an amount of labour under which many a younger man would have sunk. He was also distinguished in his early days for mirthfulness and hilarity, which, subsequently subdued and sanctified by religion, formed one of the most striking traits of his religious character. Throughout life he was ever disposed to be sanguine, and to look on the bright side of things. With him the star of hope seemed always to be above the horizon; he hoped for the best, and was accustomed to say to those with whom he was associated, at moments when their plans were on the eve of being abandoned as impracticable, "something will turn up."

From Mr. Watson's school, Mr. Proudfit was removed, about the year 1785, to an academy at Hackensack, New-Jersey, then under the care of that eminent classical scholar and devoted Christian, the late Dr. Peter Wilson. Here he remained, enjoying the best educational advantages which our country then afforded, until March, 1789, when he entered the sophomore class of Columbia College, New-York. Dr. Wilson was about the same time called to occupy the professorship of ancient languages in that college, an office which he filled with signal benefit to the institution, and honour to himself, during the remainder of his life.* He was a ripe scholar, and to him, in a great measure, may be ascribed that taste for classical learning, for the cultivation of which Columbia College has been long distinguished. Mr. Proudfit continued to reside in the family of Dr. Wilson after the removal of the latter to New-York, and he always regarded it as a singular happiness that he had enjoyed, during so many of his early years, the intimate society and the instructions of this learned and excellent man. It deserves to be mentioned, as alike honourable to the teacher and his pupil, that the foundation was then laid of a warm and close friendship, which was dissolved

* During the latter years of his life he ceased to perform the active duties of the office, though he retained the title of emeritus professor.

only by death. At a later period (1799), Mr. Proudfit testified his high regard for his former instructor, by the efforts which he made to induce his acceptance of an invitation to the presidency of Union College, of which he was a trustee. To effect this, he wrote to his friend, Dr. John M. Mason, begging his good offices; but Dr. Mason replied in terms which showed at once his warm affection for Mr. Proudfit, and his sense of the loss which New-York would sustain by Dr. Wilson's removal. "I lament," he writes, "the resignation of Dr. Smith, and the difficulties you have to encounter in procuring a proper successor. Of Dr. Wilson's qualifications no man can doubt; but I fear, or rather hope, you will be disappointed in the expectation of obtaining him. You know that I would do anything to gratify you, and to promote the interests of learning in your part of the country, that I can do without violating my conviction of propriety. I must be frank. Count not upon me. Unless Dr. Wilson volunteered, and were anxious to leave us, I feel it my bounden duty to give to every project of removing him my determined and persevering opposition." The offer was declined by Dr. Wilson, who thus wrote to his young friend: "I am greatly obliged by the frankness as well as kindness of your letter, which I received only a few hours ago. From

Dr. Smith and Dr. Romeyn I have been informed that some of the trustees had their eye upon me to fill the vacancy. I have had sufficient time to deliberate on the subject. To no person have I given any reason to infer my acceptance, and to both of the before-mentioned gentlemen I have this day written and given an explicit answer. I should think it uncandid to hesitate in declaring my sentiments to you, as well as the principal reasons which influenced my determination." Having given these, he adds, "My comfort is, that the Lord reigns; on him I can safely rely in every situation, and I must believe it to be his will that I remain in my present place. May the Lord reward you for your friendship for me, and extend and promote your usefulness in his service."

Of Mr. Proudfit's collegiate life he has himself left no record, nor have we been able to discover any very distinct allusion to it in his diary. This want, however, is in some measure supplied by his venerable friend and fellow-student, the Reverend Dr. Milledoler of New-York, who has kindly furnished us with the following letter: "I regret that the information I have to give of our venerable friend Dr. P. is so brief. He was a member of the class next above that which I entered in Columbia College, and was associated in that class with the celebrated John

Randolph of Roanoke.* Our faculty at that time consisted of the Honourable William Samuel Johnson, formerly of the United States Senate, president; the Reverend Johann. Daniel Gros, D.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy, Chronology, and Logic; Peter Wilson, LL.D., Professor of Languages; John Kemp, LL.D., Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy; M. Marcelin, Professor of the French Language. I ought, I believe, to have included J. Chn. Kunze, D.D., who either then was, or shortly after was appointed Professor of Oriental Literature. During the three years passed with him in college we had not much personal intercourse; but I have a very distinct recollection of my respectful feelings towards him (being then myself, as I hope, under the influence of the fear of God), on account of his respectable standing in his class as a scholar, and his general deportment as a gentleman, and (as I believed) a Christian. In the time that followed our collegiate career we were for many years separated from

* Of the habits of this remarkable person, while a student, Dr. Proudfit often spoke. During his residence at college he seems to have been quite as eccentric as during his subsequent political career. Though he paid little regard to the authorities of the college, and as little to the studies of the course, he was not given to habits of dissipation, and in his own way, was a hard student. His studies were chiefly directed to history and geography, in both of which branches of learning, especially the latter, his knowledge was singularly accurate and extensive.

each other, yet brought together occasionally in benevolent institutions for the honour of our God and Saviour. Towards the close of his life, I had more frequent intercourse with him at my dwelling in Rutger's College. There, he was so kind as to make occasional calls of friendship. Sometimes, after engaging with his whole heart in conversation most agreeable to Christians, he has closed the door of my study, and requested that we might pour out our hearts at our Master's feet for each other, and the church of God. You may easily suppose, if my heart was right with God, how I must have loved him. This man of God has indeed left a noble example of consecration to the truth as it is in Jesus, and his name and his labours will long be embalmed in the grateful recollection of a very large part of our American Zion."

Mr. Proudfit made a public profession of religion about the time of his entrance into college. In a paper written within a few months of his decease, he thus describes the manner in which he was led to give himself to God: "I was drawn at first with the cords of love; found an easy transition to the light, and liberty, and consolations of the gospel, without suffering in any considerable degree the terrors of the law." To this may be added a statement which he made to his intimate and valued friend, Mr. A. G.

Phelps (of New-York), a few hours previous to his death. He was speaking of the wisdom and happiness of a life wholly devoted to Christ, and added, recollecting himself very deliberately, "I have thought so ever since the year '90." Beyond these brief statements we have no account of his earliest religious exercises.

From the letter of Dr. Milledoler, it appears that the outward deportment of Mr. Proudfit was such, during his collegiate residence, as to command respect; but he has himself often said that the state of religion among his fellow-students was wretchedly low, and acknowledged a sad declension in his own spiritual life while exposed to this evil influence. Such, indeed, was the case with the city of New-York, and the country at large, and doubtless was one of the inevitable results of the war of the Revolution, then just terminated. During the occupancy of the city by the British army, religious institutions were greatly neglected, all the congregations (those of the Episcopal persuasion alone excepted) were dispersed, their ministers exiled, and their churches desecrated. In addition to this, a large proportion of the officers of the American army, (and these were afterward the statesmen and politicians of the day) were decided infidels. Such a period of social anarchy was the fitting time for the unrestrained avowal

of skeptical opinions; religious restraints there were almost none; nor was it possible for this class of men to feel the power of that social influence, which has often compelled the infidel to keep his pernicious sentiments to himself. However the fact may be explained, certain it is, that in our country never has infidelity put on so bold a front, and never has she had so many open advocates, in the more elevated departments of society, as during the first thirty years after the war of the Revolution. Even in the schools of learning, the spirit of irreligion was rife; at Yale College, it was so in a remarkable degree, as we learn from the memoirs of the late President Dwight; and from the statements which Dr. Proudfit was accustomed to make in his later years, it would seem that Columbia College, in the days of his youth, was not much better. To such a degree did this evil spirit prevail among his fellow-students, that, during the greater part of his residence at college, he was almost ashamed to be recognised as a Christian professor. It was a miracle of mercy that he was not swept away by the torrent, in which, it is to be feared that not a few of his companions were lost; but he was saved, to be employed for half a century as an eminent instrument of making known the riches of redeeming grace.

From the commencement of his ministry, he was remarkable for his zeal in the cause of his Divine Master, for the entireness with which he devoted himself to God in the gospel of his Son, and for the earnestness with which he entreated men (both from the pulpit and the press) to be reconciled to God. There can be little doubt, from the manner in which he afterward used to speak of his collegiate days, that his zeal and devotedness were quickened by the remembrance of his former unfaithfulness. Nor is this an uncommon method of God's providence, thus bringing good out of evil; we have an illustration of it in the history of the two most eminent of the apostles, the great apostle of the Circumcision, and the great apostle of the Gentiles. How remarkably, for instance, are the epistles of Peter, (once so confident, yet who was left to fall so low,) imbued with an humble, tender spirit. And who can doubt that Paul's labours in the gospel were rendered all the more unwearied and incessant, by the recollection that he had once been a "blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious!"

Mr. Proudfit was graduated in 1792, and with the reputation of being one of the finest scholars of his class. The prize he took was the Latin Salutatory, then esteemed the highest honour of the graduating class. Professor Wil-

son told his father that he was the best Greek scholar he had ever had under his care; Judge Webster and General Williams, the members of Congress from Northern New-York, paid him the most marked and flattering attentions, and declared at a public dinner-party about the time of the Commencement, that he was an honour to the county which had reared him. It is not surprising that such a sudden accession of honours, operating upon a young mind accustomed to strict seclusion and laborious study, should have awakened within him ambitious hopes, and longings to which he had been previously a stranger. His purpose to devote himself to the holy ministry, which had been formed at the time of his entering college, or not long after, now began to waver. While his mind was in this state of hesitation, he called upon his venerable and excellent friend, and accustomed counsellor, Dr. John Mason.* To the inquiry of the latter, what profession he had determined upon, Mr. Proudfit answered, that he had not quite made up his mind. His friend instantly penetrated the true cause of his indecision, and said, "Alexander, if you leave the service of Christ in the ministry for the pursuit of worldly honours, he will raise up others to serve him. They will obtain 'their own souls for a prey,' and yours

* The father of the late Dr. John M. Mason.

may be lost." The evil spirit of ambition and worldly-mindedness was instantly subdued by these solemn and somewhat stern words of a true and unshrinking friend. He has often said that the impression which they made upon his mind could never be described, and would never be forgotten. It was the voice of Christ speaking to him through the lips of his servant, and saying "what is that to thee? follow thou me!" "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" How great the power of faithful Christian counsel and rebuke? not that which speaketh like the piercings of a sword, but that which infuses the balm of love into the wounds inflicted by a needful and wise severity. Mr. Proudfit ever afterward spoke of this interview with Dr. Mason* with deep emotion; and no wonder, for he was then at a turning point in his history, when a single false step might have proved irretrievable. It was shortly after followed by a determination, formed in a more distinct and solemn manner, to consecrate himself to God in the gospel of his Son, and often has he expressed his joy and gratitude in the remembrance of the decision, which a gracious God then enabled him to make. "O! I have found Christ a kind

* This excellent man was called home to his eternal rest very soon after the event above mentioned. How high he stood in the esteem of all who knew him, may be seen in the fine tribute to his memory by Dr. Miller in his Life of Dr. Rodgers.

and liberal master," was one of his frequent and favourite expressions.

He immediately entered upon the study of theology under the direction of his father, in whom he had a fine model of all that the Christian minister should be. And destitute as he was of many of the helps enjoyed by a student in a town or city, he ever afterward looked back with peculiar fondness and delight to those earliest days of preparation for the ministry, which were spent in quiet study and devotion among his father's old books. It was just the fit place to "give himself" to prayer, meditation, and reading. Far be it from us to decry or underrate those schools of the prophets which have been established in our country during the last forty years, and to which the American Church, in all her departments, is so much indebted. Highly as we estimate their importance, and great as are the advantages which they furnish to the candidate for the ministry, we are, at the same time, strongly convinced that he would lose nothing by spending a part of the period of preparatory study in the quiet solitude of some godly and experienced pastor's library, in solemn communion with Christ, and earnest converse with the mighty dead. No doubt, very great spirituality of mind may be attained, even in the midst of the routine of stud-

ies, and the incessant bustle of a large seminary; yet it must be admitted that they are not very favourable to that close self-communion and self-inspection, that deep personal acquaintance with the mysteries of Christ, which are so necessary, if the youthful minister would know, beyond all peradventure, that unto him is the grace given to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and be able to say, "that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

After remaining at home one year, he returned to New-York with a view to attend the lectures in divinity of the late Reverend Dr. John H. Livingston, one of the most learned theologians of his day, and one of the best theological instructors with which the American Church has ever been favoured. In taking this step, Mr. Proudfit was only complying with the express recommendation of the branch of the church to which he belonged.* This circumstance is wor-

* In 1786, the Synod "earnestly recommended to young men who may have a view of entering into the holy ministry, to procure from their teachers proper testimonials of their acquaintance with human literature, and that they attend the lectures of the Reverend Dr. Livingston, professor of divinity in the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church at New-York, at least one year."—*MSS. Records*, 1., 44.

thy of a passing notice, because it shows that, with all the seeming exclusiveness of that day, there was, at the same time, in the several branches of the Presbyterian church, a good measure of true christian catholicism. Mr. Proudfit continued with Dr. Livingston until the completion of his studies, and subsequently maintained with him a warm and intimate friendship, which was terminated only by the death of Dr. Livingston, who closed his long and useful services to the church in 1825.

In 1794, Mr. Proudfit was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presbytery of Washington, under the inspection of the Associate Reformed Synod, the presbytery of which his father was a member, and in the bounds of which he was himself spared to labour for nearly half a century. The following extract of the presbyterial records, containing the subjects of his trial discourses, will be read with interest by his old friends in his former pastoral charge:

"Mr. Alexander Proudfit, A.B., formerly a student of divinity under the care of the Presbytery of New-York, and recommended to Synod for license, had assigned to him the following pieces of trial, viz.: 1. A popular sermon from 2 Cor., v., 14. 2. A lecture from John, x., 1–5. 3. An exegesis, "An reatus primi peccati Adami proprie imputatur omnibus posteris?" A

few months afterward the following pieces of trial were assigned to him by the same body, with a view to his ordination to the holy ministry, viz.: 1. An exercise and addition (or, as it is now called, a critical exercise), on Heb., i., 3. 2. A lecture on Psalm iii. 3. An exegesis, "An infantes fidelium sunt baptisandi?" He was licensed at a meeting of presbytery, held in Galway, Saratoga County, on the 7th of October, 1794.

It is much to be lamented that Mr. Proudfit has left no full record of the two years which he spent in the formal work of preparing for the ministry, of his studies, and his spiritual exercises. This is all the more to be regretted, because, from the manner in which he entered upon the duties of the sacred office, it is manifest that his mind had become imbued with a deep seriousness; and from one of his resolutions adopted in 1800, this appears to have been a season during which, he greatly "abounded in joy through the power of the Holy Spirit." Next to the diligent study of the Holy Scriptures, he loved to converse with the great Nonconformist theologians of the seventeenth century, and especially with John Owen, of whom the late Mr. Cecil testifies, that he is before all others in his ability to furnish the student's mind. Mr. Proudfit's surviving friends bear witness that he

was, during the period before referred to, and for many years after his ordination, a laborious student, rising in summer with the first dawn of day, that he might devote the freshness and quiet of morning's earliest hours to undisturbed reading and meditation. With this intellectual activity, he combined the diligent cultivation of the heart; his studies were prosecuted under the blessed influence of the Spirit of holiness, and many an hour was consecrated to the solemn and most profitable exercises of fasting and prayer. The happy effect of such a training for the holy ministry was seen from the first moment of his entrance into the pulpit; it was evident to all, that he not only pointed to others the road to heaven, but himself led the way.

CHAPTER II.

HIS EARLY MINISTRY.

About three months after Mr. Proudfit's licensure, he was called by the congregation of Salem to become the colleague and successor of his father. This call he accepted, and was ordained and installed in that charge on the 13th of May, 1795. Such settlements of "a son with a father" in the ministry of reconciliation have not been uncommon; but the cases are by no means frequent in which the son has succeeded to the respect and veneration in which the father had been held. There are grounds, however, for believing that, from the first, Mr. Proudfit was "esteemed very highly in love" by his people, for his own sake as well as for his father's. No pastor could stand higher than he did in the affectionate regards of his congregation.

Of his "manner of entering into" the pastoral office, and the zeal with which he laboured for the salvation of those "among whom he went preaching the Gospel of Christ," a judgment may be formed from the following interesting communication by Mr. John M'Murray, for many years past an elder of the church of Salem: "Of Mr. Proudfit's early life," he writes, "I rec-

ollect but little ; he was probably about thirteen when he came to this town with his father's family, and he was afterward absent a considerable time receiving his education. Of his early ministry I recollect something. I remember his first communion, especially the Saturday's preparatory services ; he had finished his sermon, and given notice of the distribution of tokens,* when, coming down from the pulpit for that purpose, he stopped upon the stairs, and commenced a most solemn and earnest exhortation to intended communicants. The language of the address was probably soon forgotten, but the attitude of the speaker and the sensation produced on the audience are still fresh on my mind ; and, although about forty-nine years have elapsed, I can now, when reflecting on that old church and that young minister, adopt the sentiment of the poet,

> "'Deserted now thy fane ;
> The herald's voice, the song, the prayer
> Are silent ; but the fragrance still remains
> Which filled me there.'

* The use of tokens in connexion with the observance of the Lord's Supper is a custom peculiar to Scottish Presbyterian Churches. After the preparation sermon on Saturday, the communicants came forward to the foot of the pulpit, and received from the minister, each of them, a token, which is just equivalent to a certificate of membership. The custom was early introduced into the Church of Scotland, probably in consequence of the vast multitudes which, at that day, usually assembled whenever this holy ordinance was administered.

During the first years of his ministry he continued this practice at the giving of tokens; but, by becoming common, it ceased to produce the same effect, and he omitted it.

"I recollect his tender anxiety for the Christian conduct of his people; if any of them were guilty of disorderly conduct—and in those days of the common use of intoxicating liquors disorders would occasionally happen—his wounded feelings were plainly indicated by his appearance in the pulpit on the following Sabbath; and while with meekness and gentleness he would expostulate with the delinquents, his own emotions would frequently become so powerful as to stop his utterance, when he would sit down until his mind became composed, and then he would rise and resume his discourse. These scenes, when they happened, always produced a solemn effect upon the audience.

I recollect, also, some of the plans he adopted in the early part of his ministry for the instruction of youth. The second winter after his settlement he divided the congregation into four sections, and appointed a young man as superintendent in each section, whose duty it was to keep a list of all the youth in his district who were old enough to commit to memory and answer questions, and also to see that they all attended the public catechising. By this means,

the Shorter Catechism was learned by all, Muckersie's by most, and the larger by many, and the Scripture proofs by some. This plan, in time, gave way to others; but throughout his ministry his attention was so unremittingly directed to the young people of his charge that it was said he could call them all by name. He had an ardent attachment to social prayer. This occasioned his exertions to have prayer meetings kept up in different parts of the congregation, and he always expressed his delight in them, not only as a means of doing, but of receiving good. When he appointed a prayer meeting in a particular district, he would, during the forenoon of the day, go through the neighbourhood, urging the people to attend. He had a peculiar faculty of making those meetings interesting and profitable; he seldom preached, but conversed, exhorted, prayed, and called on others to pray, and catechised the young. If any of his Christian friends called upon him, or he on them, and a suitable occasion offered, he always proposed prayer. In fact, he seemed to live in an atmosphere of devotion; even in travelling on the road, passing to or from the adjoining towns in company with any of his elders, on coming to a retired part of the road, he would say, 'Here is a private place; let us stop and offer up a prayer.' Several of those places are hallowed in the rec-

ollection of some of those elders. In many instances whole families, who had lived in the neglect of ordinances, were brought into the fold of Christ; and for forty years, though many were removing to new countries, the accessions so overbalanced the removals as to occasion a constant increase of members. I believe in that time there was no communion without receiving some new members, the number varying from one to over forty. On account of his extensive acquaintance with Christians of other denominations, many from a distance often attended his communion services, and were always received with pleasure to the hospitalities of his house, and to the communion of the church; among them I have often seen young divinity students from Massachusetts, and venerable deacons from Vermont.

"It was usual to give tokens of admission to the members of the Presbyterian Church in this place, with whom we were acquainted, when they applied for them. At one time they were disappointed of preaching in their own church on the morning of our communion, and came in a body to ours; the doctor called the session together, and it was resolved unanimously to invite them to unite with us; their elders were furnished with tokens for the people, and the members of the two churches intermingled

around the table of their common Lord. It was an occasion of joy to many pious hearts, who considered it a pledge of the time when their One Shepherd should have but one visible fold. Many who united on that occasion are now, we trust, associated in the heavenly temple, among whom are three elders of each session, with the ministers of both churches.

"I recollect that the services of some communion seasons commenced at ten o'clock on the Friday; one hour was spent in prayer, then sermon, then an interval, and the afternoon spent in addresses, exhortations, and prayers; Saturday, the same; Sabbath forenoon was devoted to the action sermon, in the afternoon the communion was administered, and the whole concluded on the Monday at noon. On the week days he had the help of as many ministers as he could get: on one of those days the Reverend Mr. Tomb, his neighbour, exclaimed, 'It is the happiest day I ever saw!'

"When there seemed to be much excitement in the congregation, the doctor would invite those who wished to have private conversation to repair to a certain part of the church; I have seen those seats crowded with persons of different ages, asking, with tears, 'what they must do to be saved.'

"Mr. Proudfit took an active interest in our

common schools; at that time there was no such office as that of town superintendent of common schools, but he faithfully performed many of the duties of that office; he visited all the schools in the town every year; he suggested and carried into effect the plan of common school celebrations, when they all met in the church, each school under its own teacher; addresses were then delivered suited to the occasion. He concluded his care of the schools by making a donation of the Evangelical Family Library, in fifteen volumes, and a copy of the work entitled 'The Power of Religion,' to each district in the town, and to two in the adjoining towns; he also gave to each child in the congregation a copy of the Shorter Catechism, with proofs."

Some of the facts contained in this communication belong to the later periods of Mr. Proudfit's ministry; still, the whole letter is quite in place, as it serves to show that, from the commencement to the close of his pastoral life, he was the same zealous, painstaking minister of Christ, ready for every good word and work. With all these out-door labours in pastoral visitation, the maintenance of prayer meetings, catechising the young, and watching over the common schools, Mr. Proudfit was by no means unmindful of the apostolic command, "give attention to reading." In none of his papers are

there any references to his studies; this we regret the more, because such notices enable us to mark the intellectual progress of a minister, and to ascertain the influences which gave tone to his principles and character. Still, they are not needed to prove that Mr. Proudfit was, what every young minister must become who desires to be greatly useful in his day and generation, a laborious student. He once observed to the writer that "no divinity student could study harder than he did during the first twenty years of his ministry;" at this period he was in the habit of rising two hours before day for the purpose of study. There is a letter from Dr. J. M. Mason of New-York dated 6th of September, 1799, which indirectly confirms the above statement, and helps to show the range of Mr. Proudfit's reading: "I wrote you a long time since by post a lengthy letter, to which I requested a speedy answer. It seems to have miscarried. I mentioned that I had purchased for you Hume's England in eight volumes, bound in calf, price ten dollars. I have also on hand an excellent copy of the best edition of the Apostolic Fathers, Greek and Latin, in two volumes, folio, same price; and also a copy of the works of Athanasius for five dollars. Taylor's Hebrew Concordance, I found, could not be procured new for less than sixteen dollars; and I offered you your choice, either to

take mine at twelve dollars, or to have the one which I should send for. It has arrived, and I now give you the same choice. I have paid about sixteen dollars for the new one." The gathering of such works by a young minister, in a remote country parish, indicates a determination to make himself intellectually a well-furnished minister of the New Testament. The members of the Synod to which he belonged signified their sense of his abilities and theological attainments, by appointing him, in 1798, within three years after his ordination, to prepare the draught of an act on the subject of "The Kingly Authority of Christ," which is to be found among the printed Acts and Testimonies of the Associate Reformed Church. It contains a brief but clear statement of the Scriptural doctrine of Christ's supreme headship; and, like all the other productions of Mr. Proudfit, affords evidence of an extensive and accurate acquaintance with Christian theology, and of a taste refined by frequent converse with the most elegant models of English composition.

The letter of Dr. Mason, just quoted, leads us to observe that a very intimate and warm friendship subsisted between that eminent man and the subject of this memoir. In a letter dated New-York, July 1, 1795, the former thus writes: "Oh! Alexander, you are near my heart,

and deep in my affections. I hope our friendship originated in Christian principle, and has been sanctified by the good Spirit of our God. I pray it may continue unimpaired by time, undestroyed by death. Jehovah Jesus bless my friend and support him, and make him an able minister of the New Testament."

Their fathers had long been fellow-presbyters, as well as ardently attached friends; and the sons, for a short time, were fellow-students. Soon after the entrance of these young friends into the ministry they commenced a correspondence, with a view to put each other in possession of their spiritual experience. It is much to be lamented that these letters cannot now be fully recovered. There are, however, a few of Dr. Mason's letters still remaining, some of which seem, from their tenor, to have belonged to this series; they will in any event be read with interest by the friends of both these excellent men. The first is dated

"New-York, 4th May, 1797.

"My very dear Friend,

"Your affectionate letter of the 6th ult. reached me nine days after it was written. Its animating and evangelical sentiment I found not more seasonable than adapted to enliven a drowsy frame and cheer a dejected heart. Yes! my friend, a spirit of slumber has crept upon church-

es and ministers; and a more fatal enemy to solid peace, to joy in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to successful vigour in his work, can hardly assail us. A great proportion of my conflict lies with this foe. There are times when the functions of spiritual life seem suspended, when evidences of grace elude our grasp, and the very energies of intellect are fixed in apathy. Yet it is *some* consolation if we have sensibility enough to feel that this is a wretched condition. I am sometimes so foolish as to imagine that, if I were rid of this plague, the rest of my burdens would be light, and the rest of my battles easy. But I have experienced every trial to be, in its turn, infinitely more than a match for my resolutions and efforts. The *present* cross is always the most painful; and it is no small part of our simplicity that we are more anxious to throw it off than to bear it; to exchange it than to have it sanctified. Yet why should our hearts be appalled, or why our patience exhausted? These are the footsteps of the flock. Our Captain, the Captain of our salvation, hath told us that 'we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom.' Without it, we should have much better reason to question our sonship, than from our united temptations, darknesses, deadnesses, and corruptions. But he hath said, and blessed, forever blessed be his name that he hath said

it, 'my *grace* is sufficient for thee, *my* strength is made perfect in weakness.' All-sufficient grace! strength perfected in weakness! Well, then, worm Jacob *shall* thresh the mountains; and you and I, oh friend, be more than conquerors through him that loved us; how delightful and how refreshing! Oh for faith of God's operation, to give implicit and universal credit to the veracity of Jesus the promiser; and worthless, and faithless, and treacherous as we are, we cannot deny that he hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. My drooping soul he sometimes brings out of the prison, my dried affections softens with his dews of blessing, and with all the reason in the world to be ashamed and confounded before him, I think I can say with Peter, when I have nothing to say of attainments, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.' To this my friend is no stranger; and if we love him, it is because he *first* loved us. Let us therefore join our voices and sing of the mercies of the Lord.

"Through the blessing of Jehovah, my congregation flourishes. Peace is within our walls, and prosperity within our palaces. Our sacramental Sabbath, which is just passed, was comfortable. Many, I hope, could say, 'truly our fellowship hath been with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' Adored be his grace;

we yet see he hath not forsaken Zion. We had twenty-four new communicants; above three hundred and twenty sat down with us. The foundations of our second place of worship are laid, and the work goes on with great spirit."

In another letter, dated New-York, 10th September, 1798, Dr. Mason thus writes, in reference to a proposal which his friend had made for a concert of prayer: "I will most cheerfully join you in consecrating some set portion of time for every week for the communion of saints at the throne of grace. Seven in the evening of the Lord's day is an hour at which I shall be liable to the least interruption. I shall meet you at the mercy-seat at that time next Lord's day. In looking for blessings, should we not begin with our own souls? I desire to know more of the fellowship of the Saviour's sufferings, and of the power of his resurrection. I need spiritual-mindedness, and long for the powerful sealing of the Spirit of promise unto the day of redemption. Should not the scarcity of labourers in the vineyard, and the small prospect of their increase, lie very near our hearts? Ought we not earnestly to solicit the Lord to pour out a Christian spirit upon those who profess Christ, to break that accursed worldly-mindedness which is the epidemic sin of the professing world, and

is eating out the savour of piety? that *the love of Christ* may *constrain* them to bring more willing and effective offerings of their perishing substance, for the firm support, and the vigorous extension of his gracious kingdom? Should we not supplicate very particularly at present for the sanctification of the rod to our sinning land? Should we not fervently intercede with our Father in heaven, that, while he blesses his Church at large, he would especially favour that branch of it with which we are more immediately connected, by keeping us from the pride of growing prosperity, by rendering us awfully cautious against the dangerous influence of carnal men, by preserving unimpaired the sweet savour of the cross of Christ in our pulpits and families, and the regular, unaccommodating exercise of spiritual discipline? Surely, if the Lord delight in us, he will keep us from that dreadful curse, an ignorant, formal, carnal ministry, which will infallibly be followed by a spirit of slumber among the people. Suppose we take these subjects in course. I keep a memorandum of them. Add others as they shall occur, and let me know. It does not seem to me for real edification to protract the immediate exercise of prayer; perhaps it may be as well to begin with meditation intermingled with ejaculations; to spend, say a quarter of an hour in this,

and then to join in prayer. If you think otherwise, tell me so."

The next letter is dated "New-York, 9th February, 1799;" and though unconnected with the series before mentioned, will doubtless be read with interest. Among other topics, it tells of additions to the library of the writer's rural brother, and thus casts some light upon his course of study. "I have purchased for you Hume's England. I have fallen in with some other works, which I mention *to you first*, viz., Athanasii Opera, 2 vols. fol.; Patres Apostolici, ed. opt., 2 vols.; Homeri Opera Spondani; Plautus Gronovii; Belsham's George III.; Taylor's Key to the Epistle to Romans (an artful piece of heresy); Knox on Education, translated into French; Witsii Exer. Academicæ; Secker's Works; Le Clerc on the Religion of the Ancient Greeks; Bourdaloue's Sermons; yea or nay? I would gladly have visited you during my banishment from the city; but the Lord saw meet to dispose of me otherwise. A severe fever, which held me, with a very short interval, for six weeks, reduced me to such extreme debility, that I was near fainting with the fatigue of ascending a single flight of steps. I was rapidly restored after the 19th of November, and enjoy my health at present better than at any period for three years back. The Lord

hath sorely scourged our city. He has been gentle to my congregation. I have not lost more than twenty communicants; but some of them were wrestlers in Zion. Among the victims in Philadelphia are Mrs. Dick and her daughter. How near, my brother, do we constantly tread on the confines of the eternal world! May Jehovah the Spirit so teach us to number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom.

"Last Tuesday, being the 5th, was observed in this city as a day of humiliation, thanksgiving, and prayer. The solemn, and apparently devout attention of all ranks, was singular. Business and amusements universally suspended; shops shut up; churches crowded; and some tokens of the Lord's gracious presence marked the day. I preached the whole day from the first part of Psalm lxv., 5. May the good Lord grant the prayers which were assuredly sent up to the throne by multitudes who know what it means to worship in spirit and in truth. My most cordial respects to your venerable father. My soul triumphs in the grave but glorious spectacle of an aged believer on the eve of being gathered to his rest, like a shock of corn fully ripe for the harvest. 'Well done,' from the grace-speaking lips of Jesus, will a thousand fold repay the toils and troubles of his pilgrimage

here. It is good; it is pleasant; it is blessed. A Christian departing to be with Christ! How rapturous! how divine! Be it my portion, O Saviour, and call me when thou wilt. Let *us*, also, press towards the mark. We have so many accursed plagues about these sinful hearts, that it seems to require but a little grace to look out wistfully for the day of deliverance. Oh! it is coming, and then we shall *indeed* sing to him that *loved* us, and *washed* us from our sins in his *own*, yea, his own *most precious blood.* The Lord Jesus be with your spirit. Pray for your friend and brother, J. M. Mason."

In another letter, written a few months after the above, Dr. Mason says, "I thank you for your kind note, and your good sermon on family religion. The Lord the Spirit bless it for the purposes for which it was penned and printed."

The sermon here referred to was one of the first of Mr. Proudfit's publications. It appears to have been preached by him on a New-Year's day, and was published chiefly for the purpose of gratuitous circulation, in the first instance, among his own people, and subsequently among the destitute inhabitants of the frontier settlements. In those days tract societies were unknown; religious books were much more ex-

pensive than they now are, and were very scarce, especially in districts so remote from the larger towns and cities as that in which Mr. Proudfit was called to labour.

His publications were designed to supply this want; for several years in succession he was accustomed to print some small practical work from his own pen, or to republish some of the precious remains of a former age for gratuitous distribution as New-Year's presents;* and, changed as are the circumstances of ministers in the present day from those of the last generation, we have no doubt that the usefulness of many a pastor would be considerably increased by his occasionally addressing his people in the same way through the medium of the press. This first publication of Mr. Proudfit is a plain, serious, practical exposition of the duty of Family Religion, and of the advantages resulting from its faithful performance. Besides the daily worship of God, he strongly urges the occasional observance of the exercises of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. "This exercise," says he, "has frequently been observed by the righteous with visible and eminent success; evidences of the Lord's wrath have been removed, and the

* Among these were Guthrie's Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ, The Spiritual Tradesman, and Owen on Forgiveness, which were published chiefly at his own expense.

light of his countenance restored. Does the hand of the Almighty lie heavy upon our habitation; have we been visited by any remarkable adversity; do the movements of Providence appear dark, so that we cannot find our path; or is there some singular blessing which we desire to obtain: these are proper seasons for families to approach the Lord in the solemnities of fasting and humiliation; to inquire by special prayer what is the ground of his controversy, imploring him to discover to us our *secret faults*, which are the cause of his indignation, and in deserved wrath to remember mercy. It is equally proper, as circumstances require, to separate days for the exercises of thanksgiving and praise. If our condition is particularly prosperous, if our families enjoy health when disease and death wave their banner round, or if we are visited of the Lord with his covenant consolations, it becomes us as a family to unite in presenting the sacrifice of adoration and thanksgiving." In these exercises he may be truly said to have abounded, as his diary proves, from the earlier years of his ministry until the close of life; he could thus, from his own experience, testify to their excellence and value.

The next letter of Dr. Mason, and which, from its tenour, appears to belong to the series before mentioned, is dated

"New-York, February 19, 1799.

"My very dear Brother,

"Your letter of the 6th came to hand on the 14th, and that of the 9th yesterday. I feel not a little affected by the dispensation of holy Providence towards you; but I desire to rejoice in your joy, that though you went through fire and through water, yet He brought you to a wealthy place. Oh! my brother, it is our Father who smites, and every rod of his correction grows upon the Tree of Life. I can sing of his mercies. I, too, can remember the days of the right hand of the Most High. I, too, know, I trust, something of the gracious experience which teaches to glorify him in the fires, which makes the cross most precious, and makes us spurn the exchange of our afflictions with all the pleasures of sin. When he laid me down during my late exile in a burning fever, he thought of his promise, *and made my bed.* The power of his consolations was beyond expression. He revealed himself to me in the glory of his Word, as God, even *my own God.* I had for several hours, on a night never to be forgotten, no liberty to utter aught but 'bless the Lord, O my soul!' The savour of it remains with me still; these are precious pledges that he will perform his word to us, and bring us at last into his heavenly kingdom. Oh! how divine! how

overwhelming! My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour. Yet a little while, my dear friend, and we shall see him as he is, and shall learn to shout as we cannot now conceive, salvation to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb. Hallelujah.

"Accept my thanks for your comforting missionary sermon. The good Lord bless it."

The providence to which reference is made in the beginning of this letter is not known, the letter of Mr. Proudfit in which it is described not having been preserved, and there being no account of it in any of his remaining papers.* The sermon spoken of was preached in Troy, at the first meeting of the Northern Missionary Society, an institution of which Mr. Proudfit was one of the founders, and during its whole existence was one of its most active friends.

This missionary society was one of the first of the kind formed in this state. It was founded on a liberal basis, and was composed of members of the Associate Reformed Synod, of the General Assembly, and of the Reformed Dutch Church, who for many years co-operated very harmoniously in supplying the wants of North-

* Dr. Mason, we are informed, was not in the habit of preserving the letters received from his correspondents, nor his own.

ern and Western New-York. There seems to have been, at this period, but little of that sectarian spirit which, of late years, has so completely infused itself into all our domestic missionary operations, and is gradually separating into distinct parties even those who for many years cooperated for the spread of the Gospel among pagan nations.

Mr. Proudfit preached the sermon at the first annual meeting of the society, in Troy, February 8th, 1798 ; and, by particular request, repeated it in Albany, at a special meeting of the society, March 6th, 1798. The sermon (on Mark, xvi., 15) is entitled " The Gospel designed for all Nations," and it deserves notice both for its own intrinsic excellence, and as an exponent of the theological and literary attainments of the youthful preacher. The points discussed are, the nature of the Gospel, the extent of its offers, the obligation to attempt its universal diffusion, and the encouragements to engage in the work : in the discussion of the first two points, the author shows that his own views of the Gospel were definite and clear, and he brings out the peculiar principles of the evangelical system with a distinctness which, it is to be feared, would not be altogether to the taste of many a missionary audience in the present day. But at that period the doctrinal differences which have since aris-

en among the different classes of Presbyterians were almost unknown; the peculiarities of New-England theology were at that time almost wholly confined to New-England, and hence, in all the missionary sermons preached at the anniversaries of the societies in this state, there is a much fuller exhibition of the doctrines of the Gospel, as held by the Reformers and the Nonconformists, than would be deemed quite proper in a modern sermon before a mixed audience. Between the missionary sermons preached at the commencement of the present century and those of the present day there is a marked difference, and, in our judgment, the difference is decidedly in favour of the former; they are much more to our taste than the latter, because of their richer evangelical unction; because they more fully unfold the nature of the Gospel of Christ. Other topics may furnish a better field for the display of the preacher's ingenuity; but surely it must be owned that the Gospel of the grace of God possesses the mightiest power to awaken the sympathies, and to call out the vigorous exertions of the Christian in behalf of the millions in the dark lands of paganism who are perishing for lack of vision. This first missionary sermon of Mr. Proudfit, while admirably calculated to build up those who heard it in their most holy faith, was no less calculated to ani-

mate them with zeal for the propagation of the Gospel at home and abroad.

There was another institution established in the year 1796, in whose prosperity Mr. Proudfit took a deep interest; we refer to Union College. This was the first undenominational college formed in the United States. Whether Mr. Proudfit can be considered as one of its founders we have not the means of determining; but he was one of its earliest friends and trustees, and he continued an active member of the board until his decease. For many years he was in the habit of attending the examinations, taking an active share in the exercises on such occasions, and frequently closing them with an affectionate and paternal address to the students.

In the former chapter it was mentioned that Mr. Proudfit gave evidence of the high regard in which he held his old instructer, Dr. Peter Wilson, by the efforts which he made to obtain the services of that excellent man as president of Union College, on the retirement of Dr. Smith in 1800. That was a very critical period in the history of the college; and there is a curious letter to Mr. Proudfit from the late Reverend I. B. Johnson, then of Albany, which may be here introduced, as showing some of the difficulties in which the college was then placed, and the active part which Mr. Proudfit took in its affairs.

"Albany, September 19, 1801.

"My dear Friend,

"I was sorry not to have met with you at Schenectady, when the trustees of the college last convened. But perhaps I ought *now* to be glad on that account; for we wanted but one to make a board, and if you or any other thirteenth member had been present, we might have proceeded to choose a president, and would probably have been precipitate in the choice. I am led to this conclusion for reasons which will develop themselves in the following statement of facts:

"Although only twelve of the trustees appeared in their room, yet we thought it well to confer a little about the proper person to succeed Dr. Edwards, deceased. Many were mentioned; but it appears that Dr. Green, of Philadelphia, and Dr. Maxcy, of Rhode Island College, commanded a large preponderance of opinion in their favour. I thought, however, that Dr. M. bid fair to be the successful candidate. It appeared reasonable to me, therefore, to communicate what I knew of these gentlemen, and to solicit for myself and the other gentlemen such additional information as it might be in the power of any member present to give. My thoughts were freely expressed. I mentioned two objections to Dr. M.: the first, that he was

a Baptist. This, it was said, might be no objection to us, as it was not particularly to me; but that the influence of such a man would be unpropitious to the prosperity of the institution, for that the support of the college must be derived chiefly from those who were opposed to the Baptist persuasion, and perhaps had no inconsiderable prejudice against them. The second difficulty I stated was of a political nature. A gentleman present had, a good while ago, told me of an oration, delivered by President Maxcy on the fourth of July, which was praised as containing some of the most brilliant expressions and keen sarcasms, &c., against the anti-federalists, I had ever seen. From this I remarked, that he appeared to be a violent politician, who would have the support of a party only; whereas the state of literature required that he should be acceptable to the great body of society. These observations having been made by me, Mr. Nott, from whom only I had got my information respecting Dr. Maxcy, mentioned that he was liked by both parties in Rhode Island; and that, as an evidence of this, while others had been assailed in the newspapers, he had escaped. Upon the whole, after some additional observations on the subject of his religious persuasion, we seemed to agree that he was the best man we could get, and my own mind was

almost determined to decide for him; and I expected, when the Board adjourned, that I should at the next meeting give him my vote and support. In the evening, however, calling at Professor Allen's, I found that he had, and would lend to me, certain publications, 'Addresses, Sermons,' &c., of President Maxcy. I was glad of this opportunity, in order to form an opinion of his abilities as a writer, for it was as a fine writer that he had been chiefly praised. I found he had some imagination, and sometimes produced a glowing expression; but I also met with 'new English' words, outlandish idioms, incorrect or unphilosophical notions, &c., such as 'energize,' 'circumferential.' But this is nothing. A preface to a sermon, republished in June, 1796, contains the following observation: 'The *only* thing essential to Christian union is love, or benevolent affection. It is, therefore, with me, a fixed principle, to censure no man except for immorality.' 'An entire coincidence in sentiment, even in *important* doctrines, is by no means essential to Christian society, or the *attainment of eternal felicity.* How many are there, who appear to have been subjects of regeneration, who have scarcely an entire comprehensive view of the doctrines of the Bible. Will the gates of Paradise be barred against these because they did not possess the penetra-

ting sagacity of an Edwards? or shall the great theological champions engross heaven, and shout hallelujahs from its walls, while a Priestley, a Price, and a Winchester, merely for difference in opinion, though pre-eminent in virtue, must sink into the regions of darkness and pain?' Enough! enough! I hear you indignantly exclaim. A professed minister of Jesus makes the faith of Jesus of no avail; and whether I believe him to be God or a creature, a true prophet or an impostor, I am equally acceptable to Dr. Maxcy, and shall find that all these contradictory sentiments are consistent with a certain course to glory. I write this believing your sentiments to be mine, and that he ought by no means to be chosen. I hope you will be on the ground, with your J. B. JOHNSON."

Dr. Maxcy, however, was chosen president of the college, and entered upon the duties of the office, though he remained in it only for a few years. In 1805 he accepted the offer of the presidency of the college at Charleston, S. C., and continued at the head of that institution until his decease.

It has been already mentioned that the Northern Missionary Society was formed with a view to supply the great spiritual destitution of the northern and central parts of the State of New-

York. Some idea may be formed of the extent of this destitution, and of the demands made upon the few settled pastors, from the fact proved by the early records of the presbytery of Washington, that at least one third of the time of the ministers who composed it was spent in preaching the Gospel to the numerous small and destitute settlements in those extensive regions.* From the commencement of his ministry, Mr. Proudfit performed his full share of these arduous labours. So deeply did he become interested in behalf of these "settlements," that he resolved to devote a portion of each year to this work. Most of his published works were sent to the press for the purpose of circulation among these scattered families. Prompted by an earnest desire to testify the Gospel of the grace of God, he was "in journeyings oft," the perils and painfulness of which the ministers of the present day can scarcely form a just conception. Of one of these journeys we have been furnished with an account, by the same friend

* "All this region, west to Niagara, and northward to the provinces of Canada, was, at that time (1783), comparatively an unbroken wilderness, physical and moral. On these valleys stood, within my own recollection, the majestic elm, towering above the other trees of the forest; here, also, prowled the hungry panther, and I remember distinctly when one of our valuable citizens was protected from the fangs of this terror of the forest by the immediate interposition of a watchful Providence."—*Hist. Salem, by Dr. Proudfit.*

to whom we are indebted for his recollections of Mr. Proudfit's early ministry, some extracts from which we shall here insert, for the sake of their connexion with the subject of this memoir, and also to show the hardships of the home missionary fifty years ago.

"We all remember the interest your revered father* always manifested in those members of his congregation who removed to the frontier settlements, and were destitute of Divine ordinances. We have often heard him recount his journeyings, oft through woods and wildernesses, to visit them in their humble dwellings. It is to me a source of some satisfaction to reflect that, in the first tour of this kind, I accompanied him. I then saw a sample of those labours in which he was afterward so abundant; I then felt some of those fatigues which he so long and so patiently endured.

"Several families from this town were pioneers in the settlement of the towns of Scipio and Milton, on the Cayuga Lake, some of whom were members of our congregation, and your father had not been long in the ministry before he determined to visit them. The country to be passed through was new, much of it unsettled; the state road had not yet been commenced. The

* It is in the form of a letter, addressed to Reverend Professor John Proudfit, D.D.

Oneida Indians still occupied their lands, through which it was necessary to go. Upon the whole, the journey was deemed rather perilous, and our fathers who then composed the session had too much regard for their young minister willingly to permit him to undertake it altogether alone. They therefore proposed to me that, if I would accompany him, the session would provide means to defray my expenses. I readily accepted the proposal, and was promptly furnished with money.

"After the lapse of more than forty-six years, you will not expect me to recollect much of our journey; and there is perhaps nothing worthy of recollection except as being your father's first missionary tour. The only incident I remember of the first day was some difficulty we had in turning out of the road for lumbermen about the river, as the snow was deep, and they were not very accommodating. At that time there was no village at Saratoga Springs; the road passed near the high rock, about which were a few log houses, while around Congress Spring were thick woods; a small frame house had been just erected on the spot now occupied by Union Hall, which was the only building in the place. Within less than a mile from the Congress Spring we found trees fallen across the road, which occasioned us some trouble to pass. That night

we reached the hospitable parsonage of the Reverend James Mairs, the minister of Galway, Saratoga county. Tuesday, 5th of March, left Mr. Mairs, and dined at Johnstown, and then rode along the bank of the Mohawk until night, when we put up at a tavern in Palatine, kept by a Mr. Weaver. This day was a very hard one; I certainly never had been so tired before, and I believe I never have been since; it had snowed all day, but in the afternoon we encountered a constant northwester. I do not know how far we rode, but I presume it was about fifty miles. Chilled through, and almost pounded to jelly, I could scarcely roll off my horse and get into the house; we then had supper of tough beefsteak, and slept upon a bed of something that I thought a good deal harder than rye straw.

"*Wednesday*, 6th. We rode through very deep snow several miles before breakfast; we crossed the Mohawk at Utica, then a mere hamlet, containing a few small houses; from thence to Whitestown the fields seemed, from the multitude of stumps, to have been newly cleared.

"*Thursday*, 7th. We passed through the nine-mile wilderness, and came to the Indian village of Oneida Castle. Here we found a large tract of level ground which appeared to have been under cultivation for many years, as not a stump was to be seen. There were at this place some

hundreds of Indian houses, all made of the bark of trees; we stopped and went into a house by the road-side, but could hold no conversation with the inhabitants, as they were ignorant of our language, and we of theirs. As we passed along we started many deer that were browsing in the woods, and met long files of Indians on their hunting expeditions, armed with rifles and long knives, and painted in the most frightful manner. We spent the night at a very comfortable tavern near Onondaga Hollow, kept by a family from Connecticut. After we were in bed, the landlord came into the room to ask your father if he was not a minister, saying that the family had been disputing upon the subject, some of them declaring that he was a Methodist minister, others that he was not; when he found who your father was, he said that if he had known it they should have had prayers, and begged that we would call at his house on our return.

"*Friday*, 8th. The country through which we passed this day was very thinly settled; we found large tracts of oak openings; others were very thickly and heavily timbered with cherry, ash, bass-wood, and white-wood trees of immense size. About sunset we reached Cayuga Lake; we then turned south along the bank of the lake, passing through dense woods, and with

no other road than a mere track in the snow. We at length discovered a light, and, on coming to the house, found that it belonged to Mr. Andrew Simpson, who received us very gladly. The next morning we rode a few miles farther to the house of Mr. John Clark, which we made our home.

"*Sabbath*, 10th. Your father preached in a log cabin which was used as a school-house; his text was Acts, iii., 26. After sermon he complained of severe depression of spirits, and asked me if I had not observed it causing him embarrassment while preaching. I told him there was nothing of the kind discernible. I do not know how often he preached, as I was not in company with him the whole time; one of the places which he visited alone was called Indian Fields.

"*Sabbath*, 17th. He preached and baptized children at Samuel Clark's. On Monday we set out on our return, and after passing over very much the same ground, and by the same stages, we arrived safely at Salem on Friday evening the 22d of March.

"This was my first journey with your father I have had many since, none of them so long, but all pleasant and profitable. The last one was about a year ago, from Whitehall; the day pleasant; we were alone; he was full to over-

flowing, and most delightfully communicative; he appeared to me like one on the confines of heaven, occasionally looking in and enjoying a glimpse of the glory to be revealed, and occasionally looking back upon the world, retracing his journey through it, wondering at and admiring the goodness and mercy which had followed him, enumerating particular instances of God's kindness, while, with deep humility and all the simplicity of a child, he seemed penetrated with a sense of his own shortcomings, and the remains of corruption with which he was still burdened, yet rejoicing in the hope of a speedy deliverance.

"'He longed
To have his passport sign'd and be dismissed.
'Tis done, and now he's happy; the glad soul
Has not a wish uncrown'd. Even the lag flesh
Rests, too, in hope of meeting once again
Its better half.'

"May you and I, and our families and friends, be followers of those who, through faith and patience, now inherit the promises.

"Yours truly,
"J. M'M.

"Reverend Professor Proudfit, D.D."

Though the special object of this missionary tour was to visit the few families living in the wilderness, which had formerly been connected with his own pastoral charge, it still brought

him in contact with the Indian population in Central New-York, and was the means of exciting his warm sympathies in behalf of that unhappy race. In subsequent years he repeatedly visited the Indian settlements. The Northern Missionary Society, very soon after its foundation, entered into this field, and long sustained the Gospel among several of the tribes of New-York Indians. Among the letters of Mr. Proudfit, there are still remaining two addressed by him, in the name of the Society, to one of these settlements, and to the clergyman whom it was proposed to send among them. The letter to the Indians is as follows:

"Salem, 11th Sept., 1800.

"Brethren dearly Beloved,

"Our hearts were greatly refreshed with those sentiments of affection and confidence which were expressed in your letter of October, 1799; and our joy was greatly increased to find that you so ardently desire a minister of the Lord Jesus, to reside constantly among you, and teach you, your children, and your wives, the truths of his precious Gospel. We ourselves esteem a knowledge of Christ infinitely interesting, and shall esteem it matter of everlasting joy if we can be instrumental, under God, in spreading among you the savour of his precious name. Although we live considerably distant from you,

and although we may differ from you in customs, colour, and language, yet we acknowledge you as our dear brethren by nature, as created by the same Great Spirit, as descended from the same original pair, and that Jesus whom we love, in whose blood we expect salvation, is the Saviour of all men, is the desire of all nations, is offered freely to people of every colour, of every country, of every language who will receive him. These considerations both urge and encourage us to make every possible exertion to diffuse among your nation the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom are forgiveness of sins, peace with the Great Spirit, the adoption of sons, comfort in death, and everlasting blessedness to all who believe.

Farther, as you have desired particularly our reverend brother, Mr. Crosby, we have attempted, and still are attempting to obtain him as your minister; and, should the Great Spirit dispose him to settle among you, we earnestly pray that he may enter your abodes in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, that he may be long spared as a blessing to your nation, and that, through his abundant labours, you, your wives and children, may become wise unto salvation. As we have formerly written, we again declare ourselves to be your true friends, that we desire not your houses or lands, that our

highest object in sending you teachers and ministers is to make you happy in life, in death, and through eternity. By order of the Board of Northern Miss. Soc.

"A. PROUDFIT, *Sec'y*."

The second letter of the same date is addressed to Rev. Mr. Sargeant, the well-known missionary to the Stockbridge Indians, and appears to have been written with a view to obtain the person named in the letter to the Oneidas, as a stated pastor to that nation.

Besides the letters relative to the Oneida Indian mission, there is quite a collection of others, which attest the ardour of his Christian zeal and love. Many of them were private, others were written to the vacancies under the care of the Presbytery of Washington; they breathe a most affectionate spirit, expressing the writer's deep sympathy with them in their destitute condition, and testify his readiness to supply their spiritual needs to the utmost of his ability, and, at the same time, urging them, with much solemnity, never to cease their own exertions until their eyes were permitted to "behold their teachers." Among all these letters, there is not one written, as too many presbyterial letters are, in a dry, curt, business-like form. Their general character may be gathered from the following specimen. It is dated

"Salem, 14th April, 1799.

"*To the vacant Congregation in L——.*

"Beloved Brethren,

"Your letter, handed me this morning, enclosing the petition for supplies, excited emotions of sorrow and joy; of sorrow, when I hear of your desolate condition in a spiritual sense, being destitute, in a great measure, of both the stated and occasional preaching of the Gospel. This want, although little felt, or rarely lamented by the world in general, yet to those who have experienced the power of religion it must be the subject of deep concern. How fervently did the soul of the Psalmist aspire after the sanctuary of Divine grace. 'One thing,' he ardently exclaims, 'have I desired of the Lord;' amid all my other pursuits, this claims my principal, prominent attention; 'that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple; for a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

"The preaching of the Gospel has been in all ages a special means of extending and establishing the kingdom of the dear Redeemer. This, the Holy Ghost has honoured, perhaps, above every other ordinance for enlightening,

alarming, encouraging, supporting, and perfecting all who are the subjects of his gracious influence, and who shall hereafter be made heirs of everlasting salvation. Yet, brethren, it may seem as a consolation to you, and to me on your account, that Israel's God is not confined to ordinances. He has, indeed, chosen Zion eminently for his habitation. He delights in her 'gates more than all the dwellings of Jacob,' yet he is not limited to her palaces. Easily he can, and frequently he does, convert the wilderness places, where the river of life never flows through the medium of the sanctuary, 'into a pool of water, and the dry land into water springs, to give drink to his people, his chosen.' Thus Bethel was to Jacob; the Cave of Engedi to David, a prison to Peter, a tribunal to Paul, a desert island to John, places of the most amiable, intimate, and refreshing communion with their covenant God. He is ever near to them that call upon him. He is all-wise to discover our necessities, he is all gracious to compassionate, and all sufficient to supply them.

"While I sympathize with you in your desolate condition, I cannot refrain from expressing that joy which I experienced in learning from your petition that a thirst for ordinances is still felt among you. This condition is a pleasing, precious pledge that Jehovah entertains designs of

visiting you. These desires are created by himself, and they are created only to be graciously answered. 'He will satiate the longing soul, and fill the hungry soul with good things.' Be not discouraged, dearly beloved, by any disappointments you have formerly experienced, nor by present appearances, however gloomy, nor from future prospects, which may possibly be unpromising. In evening time light frequently arises upon Zion; the darkest hour has often preceded immediately the brightest shining of the Sun of Righteousness, on individuals, on congregations, and on nations. Frequently has a Sovereign God rendered attempts apparently feeble, and at seasons the most unfavourable, effectual for producing astonishing effects. Thereby he disappoints the fears, and answers the prayers of his people. 'Be ye therefore steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.' Are you destitute of the public ordinances which Jehovah has appointed for meeting and conversing with his people, be the more diligent in the private institutions of searching the Scriptures, of secret prayer, family prayer, of instructing, encouraging, exhorting your children in the great concerns of their souls. Although the fulness of the covenant be not brought nigh to you in the preaching of the gospel, it is presented in the

precious promises, it is offered in the present address.

"I now conclude, exhorting all those whom this letter may concern, by everything valuable in their souls, by all that is solemn in death, by all that is joyful in heaven, by all that is horrible in hell, immediately to accept Jesus Christ as the ordinance of God for their salvation. Children of wrath you and I are by nature, and such we must forever remain without a real, vital union to the Son of God. How shall we escape if we neglect this great salvation? Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh. His righteousness, his infinitely meritorious righteousness is absolutely, divinely free; it is offered in the Gospel to the chiefest of sinners. That you may all be clothed with this immaculate robe, this 'linen clean and white,' and, through sanctifying influences of the Spirit, be presented at last without spot or wrinkle, is the prayer of your devoted servant in the Gospel of Christ.

"A. PROUDFIT."

Such were the instructive, encouraging, and truly apostolical communications which the subject of this memoir was accustomed to send to those churches in the wilderness which were destitute of the stated ministration of word and ordinances. He thus aimed to supply the lack

of a personal visit, and in some instances we have reason to believe that these epistolary labours were the means of producing blessed results. Greatly changed as is the condition of the American Church in all her branches since the above letter was penned, there are still in all denominations numerous feeble congregations in just such circumstances as those of the congregation at L——; and there surely can be no doubt as to the happy influence that might be expected to be produced upon them by the occasional receipt of a letter expressive of the sympathy, and filled with the exhortations and encouragements by which the letter to the people of L—— is characterized.

Of the private letters, the largest portion were addressed to persons removing from the bounds of his own or other congregations, and to those on whom God's afflicting hand had been laid. This method of counselling, exhorting, and comforting those who were beyond the limits of his ordinary pastoral care he appears to have used with singular diligence from the very outset of his ministry. Many delightful and most edifying epistles might be given. We cannot forbear the insertion of two of these early letters. The first is addressed to the father of one of those solitary families which were so much in Mr. Proudfit's heart. It is dated in 1796.

"My dear Friend,

"Since, in the providence of God, we had our last interview, I have felt no little anxiety about your spiritual condition. I scarcely reflect upon you and your family but that awful passage recurs to my mind, 'where no vision is, the people perish.' 'How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?' These passages do not imply that there is no possibility of being saved where we do not enjoy the preaching of the Word, but they show that the Gospel preached is a principal means of our conversion and salvation. The ministry was instituted for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ. One circumstance you mentioned tended greatly to increase my anxiety for you; that is, your having a numerous family of children. Each of these I consider as a most weighty charge; their souls are of more value than the whole world, because they must live forever, either in perfect blessedness or unutterable torment. The wicked, the ungodly, Christless sinner shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. These solemn considerations induced me to enclose for your use a number of religious tracts, some for yourself, and others for your children. They are given from the purest regard for your

immortal welfare, and my fervent prayer to God is, that the reading of them may redound to his glory and your joy in time and through eternity; but always, in reading them, and in beginning to instruct your offspring, earnestly implore the presence and blessing of your Lord, the Spirit. Without his enlightening and quickening influences to apply them, we never can read the Scriptures, or any other book, to our spiritual advantage. Where the Gospel comes, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, it will then be effectual to our conviction and eternal salvation. There are many precious promises encouraging us to ask the aid of the gracious Spirit, some of which I shall mention, that you may read and meditate upon at your leisure. Isaiah, lv., 10, 11; lix., 20, 21. Jeremiah, xxxi., 33, 36. Ezekiel, xxxvi., 25–27. Deuteronomy, xxx., 6. Luke, xi., 9–13. Acts, ii., 38, 39. Some I have quoted from the Old Testament, and others from the New; they both are the truth of the living God, and are profitable for reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Now, my dear friend, I recommend you and your family to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Pray frequently with your children; pray for them, and let the salvation of their precious

souls be the object of your first concern. Now, that Israel's God may bless you abundantly, and your children; that he may clothe you with the righteousness of his Son; sanctify you with the grace of his Holy Spirit, and at last give you an abundant entrance into his kingdom of glory, is the prayer of your servant in the Gospel of Christ, A. P."

The second letter is addressed to a female friend, who had been called to drink of the cup of affliction. It is dated

"Salem, 6th of September, 1799.

"MADAM,

"With this letter I send, for your perusal, some tracts of the eminently pious Mr. Flavel. I have pointed out, as peculiarly adapted to your condition, the one entitled 'The Balm of the Covenant.' It is a most precious treasure, and unfolds with more than ordinary wisdom the fulness of the everlasting covenant. With great propriety is it called 'balm,' being fitted in every respect to heal the spiritually wounded, by exhibiting blood divine for the remission of guilt; infinite righteousness, to cover spiritual nakedness; almighty strength, to support the feeble; and everlasting consolation, to raise up the fainting spirit. There is one character in which it reveals Almighty God *pre-eminently suited* to

your situation. We can hardly avoid supposing that the author, in mentioning it, was intended by the Spirit of grace to become the instrument of comfort to you. A *husband to the widow* is the character of Jehovah to which I allude, as very comforting to you in your present state. Is not your recent temporal loss amply compensated when thy Maker becomes thy husband, whose name is the Lord of Hosts, the God of all the earth? Will you excuse me while I interrupt your enjoyment of the precious Flavel by making a few observations on this endearing title? Surely a short reflection upon it cannot fail to cheer the gloom of solitude, to soothe the bosom of despondency, and dry up the tears of the weeping widow. Was she naturally led to look to her husband for protection in the hour of danger? The Eternal God has promised to be her refuge, and to keep beneath her his everlasting arms. Was her husband the immediate resource for provision in the time of necessity? Creation is the Lord's; he is able and willing to supply the wants of all who apply to him. Did she make her husband the repository of her sorrows? Lo! as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him: his ears are ever open to their cries. Was the society of her husband her greatest earthly delight? This want is a thousand fold more than made

up by the fellowship of the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Revolving in the mind those tender invitations, 'come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,' 'be careful for nothing, but in everything let your requests be made known unto God,' even the solitary widow may exult with the poet,

> "'Tis naught to me;
> Since God is ever present, ever felt,
> In the void waste, as in the city full,
> And where he vital breathes there must be joy;'

or, in the more elevated strains of the inspired bard, 'the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?' 'When my father and mother, or husband, forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

"Without intruding longer on your patience, suffice it to remark, that these excellences reside in an earthly husband only in a finite degree, but in Jehovah they dwell in infinite perfection. An earthly companion may contribute a temporary support, but the riches of Jesus are unsearchable; the inheritance which he bestows is unfading. An earthly companion, by tender sympathy, may soothe for a moment, but the consolations which the Divine Redeemer gives are everlasting. The union which subsists between Christ and believers shall never be dissolved; they are betrothed to him forever, and

the communion they are privileged to enjoy with him affords a happiness, noble as the nature of the immortal spirit, large as its desires, and lasting as its duration. That these truths, which are founded upon the Word of God, and (glory to his name!) have been felt by his people, may be realized in your experience, and that the affliction you have been called to endure may work out for you an exceeding weight of glory, is the prayer of your affectionate

"A. P."

Mr. Proudfit was married on the 2d of October, 1796, to Miss Susan Williams, daughter of General John Williams,* of Salem. It was the

* General Williams was a large landholder in the county of Washington, and was among the earliest settlers of the town of Salem. His character well deserves an extended notice, and presents a fine model for the imitation especially of persons holding a similar position in society. It is not too much to say that his influence greatly helped to give that county the elevated rank in a moral point of view which it has so long held. How high he stood in the esteem of the people of that district, may be judged from the fact that he was their representative in Congress during the long period of twenty-four years. The journals of that day often notice him as an effective speaker on the floor of Congress; while those who personally knew him have always delighted to speak of his ample hospitality, his affable manners, and his remarkable powers of conversation; but his history, in connexion with his own county, is the most interesting, as it shows what may be done by a man of wealth, of enlarged views and liberal spirit, for the advancement of the cause of education and religion. The first academy of Salem was erected entirely at his expense, and he assisted liberally in the erection of the Presbyterian Churches at White-

privilege of Mrs. Proudfit to have enjoyed the instructions of that eminently godly woman, Mrs. Isabella Graham, of New-York, in whose school she partly received her education. In all the various labours of her husband she took a lively interest, and rendered him most efficient help. Delicacy, however, forbids our entering into details. Yet we may say that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a more beautiful illustration of all that a minister's household should be, than that which was afforded in the former parsonage of Salem.

hall and Hebron. His character is thus finely drawn by his son-in-law, in the epitaph inscribed upon his monument: "In him were united the tender husband, the affectionate parent, the agreeable companion, the useful citizen, the enlightened and true Christian. Endeared to his relatives by the qualities of his heart and the tenderness of his deportment, in life he enjoyed their respect, and his memory is cherished with affection."

CHAPTER III.

EARLY RESOLUTIONS.

The year 1800 is marked by the adoption of a series of resolutions by Mr. Proudfit for the regulation of his conduct as a Christian and as a minister of the gospel. These resolutions are worthy of notice, both for their own intrinsic excellence, and for the light they throw upon his subsequent life; the whole paper, as drawn up by himself, is as follows:

RESOLUTIONS.

This 7th day of March, in the year of our Lord 1800, I, Alexander Proudfit, adopt the following resolutions for regulating my conduct, which I would humbly attempt to perform, through the Lord Jesus Christ strengthening me:

1. To live more entirely for God and to him, under an impression that I am not my own; to make his glory in the salvation of men the great and reigning object of my life, to which I am bound by creation, by preservation, by redemption, and, more especially, by voluntarily assuming the ministerial office.

2. That I will begin each day with prayer to God for his blessing during that day, that he

would direct in every step which I am called to take, that he would prosper me in my studies, and enable me to spend my time, my talents, my worldly property in the manner most adapted to promote the foregoing resolution.

3. That I will aim particularly at crucifying my spiritual pride, as that accursed lust which immediately arrogates to myself that glory which is due to the living God, and as the sin which more easily besets me. For this end, O my soul! consider that whatever thou hast, and of which thou art tempted to boast, whether of body or mind, or outward circumstances, or favour in the opinion of men, are freely given thee of God, and are talents for which thou must render an account when he comes to be glorified in his saints. Reflect frequently on the following passages of Scripture: 1 Cor., iv., 7; Matt., xxv., 14–30.

4. That I will endeavour each day to read some portions of the Word of God, not merely as a critic, that I may be capable of defending them, nor merely as a minister, that I may be better qualified for instructing others, but as a sinner, who am myself infinitely interested in these doctrines, and that, as a new-born babe, I may thereby be growing up to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

5. That each evening, not knowing but my

soul may be required before morning, I will call myself to an impartial account for my conduct during the day, inquiring what duties have been omitted which might and ought to have been discharged, and what levities have been indulged which might and ought to have been avoided.

6. That, as this life is the only period of my existence in which I can be instrumental in the salvation of others, I will aim, not only from a principle of fidelity to my Master, but of compassion to perishing sinners, to do all in my power for bringing them to Christ.

7. That I will endeavour to forgive all men, even those who are most malignantly opposed to me, and not render railing for railing, thus imitating the example and following the injunction of my Lord, Matt., v., 40–48.

8. That I will avoid as much as possible entertaining unkind and ungenerous thoughts of others, lest thereby their real intentions be misconstrued.

9. That I will pursue the utmost economy in my dress, my diet, my family and travelling expenses, that I may be enabled to spare the more for promoting the temporal, and especially the spiritual interests of others.

10. That I will aim at recovering and maintaining that spirituality of frame, that fervour of devotion, that ardour of love to the Lord Jesus,

that concern for his glory and for the souls of men, which I have often felt in a powerful degree, and by which I was first constrained to enter the sacred ministry.

11. That I will endeavour to remember, in my spiritual exercises of meditation and prayer, ministers of the gospel, whatever may be their communion, or wherever their residence may be, because I know by experience that their work is an arduous one, their discouragements many, and in their fidelity, the honour of Jesus, the success of the gospel, and the eternal welfare of souls are deeply involved.

12. That hereafter I will aim at viewing religion as properly the business of my life ; that in the morning I will resign myself wholly to the Lord's disposal through the day, and depend on him for direction how to spend it most answerably to the end of my creation, redemption, and ministerial calling.

13. That, under a conviction of my infinite insufficiency for the least service, under the bitter experience that my heart is deceitful above all things, I will surrender it entirely to the Lord's keeping—Ps. xvi., 1 ; cxxi., 1–6—and esteem as more precious than a thousand worlds the following promises which secure my perseverance : Rom., v., 9, 10 ; viii., 29, 30. Phil., i., 6. Jude 24, 25.

14. That, after my return from preaching, especially if some ease or enlargement has been experienced, I will watch against pride and self-sufficiency. 2 Cor., iii., 5.

15. That I will endeavour to avoid being much elated by prosperity or depressed by adversity, reflecting that I am a stranger and a sojourner upon earth, that this world is not my home, and be looking out for that house which is eternal in the heavens.

16. That, as my natural constitution is feeble, I will endeavour to be frugal of my strength, and spend it to the best advantage.

17. That I will always aim at devising new plans for promoting the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour, which is the great work to which I was set apart upon entering the ministry.

18. That I will avoid unnecessarily postponing the discharge of any duty, remembering that life is uncertain, and that sufficient for each day, and week, and month will be the work thereof. 2 Cor., vi., 2.

19. That I will endeavour to wait patiently upon an absent God; that, though he may seemingly shut out my prayer by not giving an immediate answer, I will aim at exercising resignation to his will, and trust that the best blessings will be communicated in the best time. Hab., iii., 17. Luke, xviii., 17.

20. Resolved not to rejoice or glory in any external advantages, as I must thereby have them removed or imbittered in their enjoyment; neither to set my affections greatly on anything temporal, as all beneath God himself is both uncertain and unsatisfying, but to aim at walking by faith on things unseen. 1 Kings, viii., 19. Matt., vi., 24. 2 Cor., iv., 10.

21. Resolved to depend less on books of human composition, and to become more diligent in searching the Holy Scriptures, with a reliance on the Spirit of Wisdom for teaching me their real import. Ps. xxv., 14. Isa., xlviii., 17. James, i., 5.

22. Resolved that, as I know from the Word of God and from observation that all instruction, private or public, must be unavailing without Almighty power accompanying, I will ask direction of the Lord in the choice of my subjects, in the manner of discussing them, and for his blessing to render them effectual. John, xxi., 6. Mark, i., 17. John, vi., 45.

23. Resolved that, as my mind is disposed to wander in the night no less than by day, and dreams, vain and unprofitable, do often disturb, I will commit the keeping of my soul to Israel's Shepherd, whether asleep or awake. Ps. cxxi., 3–8. Phil., iv., 6–7.

24. Resolved that, as I am informed by Scrip-

ture, and have often experienced to my sorrow and self-loathing, that the heart is deceitful above all things, and as it has betrayed me to the loss of my spiritual comfort and confidence with God, I will aim at keeping it with all diligence in every circumstance, whether of health or affliction, and upon all occasions, whether alone or in company.

25. Resolved to avoid speaking evil of others, or making remarks upon their character or conduct, unless I thereby design, as in the presence of God, to warn my own soul, or those with whom I converse.

26. Resolved frequently to read the Four Gospels, that I may thereby bear in mind the great God, my Saviour, and learn to imitate his example in submission to the will of his Father, and diligence in fulfilling the work for which he was set apart, considering it his meat and drink to do the will of Him that sent him; also to imitate his charity towards others in distress, and his meekness and forbearance towards his opposers.

27. January 1st, 1801. Resolved that, as another period of my life is gone, and I am advanced another pace nearer the end of my course, I will endeavour to live nearer to God, and more entirely for him.

28. Resolved to become more crucified to this present evil world, to its profits, and honours,

and delights. For this end, contemplate, O! my soul, the example of thy Saviour—his outward appearance upon earth. Behold him in his birth, Luke, ii., 7. Phil., ii., 7. As another means of crucifying me to the world, read the following passages: Matt., xvi., 26. Luke, xii., 31. Col., iii., 1–3.

29. Resolved to improve every opportunity of doing good to the souls of men, whether at home or on the road, when I occasionally meet with them, or on a journey when I call at public houses.

30. Resolved that, as I need line upon line, and require so many remembrancers of my duty to God, to his Church, and to myself, that I will frequently read over my first and eleventh resolutions.

These resolutions will be read with more than ordinary interest by those who were intimately acquainted with their author during the greater part of his ministry. They show that, from its earliest years, those excellences for which he was distinguished were distinctly proposed by him as objects of attainment; and it is not too much to say that it would be impossible to find a case in which the early resolutions of a minister were more faithfully observed than in that of Dr. Proudfit. It is a serious thing to enter into a

covenant with God (as this transaction may fitly be called), and there can be no doubt that the solemn adoption of these rules exerted a powerful influence on Mr. Proudfit through his whole subsequent career, and was, under God, an important means of making him, what he became, "a burning and shining light." He often perused them, as we shall afterward see, in the seasons of meditation and prayer.

These resolutions show that he was distinguished by, substantially, the same traits of character in the first as in the latter years of his ministry; and among those which deserve special notice were *the spirit of devotion;* this he resolved to cultivate; and it might eminently be said of him, that "he gave himself to prayer." It was the same with him, whether at home or abroad, in private or in company. Besides his stated seasons of personal and family devotion, he was accustomed, as his diary attests, to set apart frequently the whole, or a part of a day, to the exercises of prayer and fasting, fixing, at the same time, upon some specific topics of meditation and supplication. That precious promise of our Redeemer—"if any two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt., xviii., 19)—was one whose value and importance he seem-

ed deeply to feel; thus, when in conversation with a friend or in the family circle, in his own house or elsewhere, he would seize the first opportunity that occurred to propose spending a few moments in prayer, repeating, at the same time, the words before quoted, and suggesting some particular subjects of supplication relating either to individuals present, to some one of the great objects of Christian benevolence, or to the general welfare of the Church of God. This he would do in a way the most delicate and happy; there was nothing approaching to constraint or affectation; nothing to offend the most fastidious taste. When about commencing any work—for instance, before making an appeal to any person on behalf of some benevolent object—he would invariably make it the subject of prayer, and, if possible, get some Christian friend to unite with him. His correspondence with Dr. Mason, with the late Mr. Bethune, and many others, contains frequent references to concerts of prayer, the proposal of which originated with himself.

Activity in doing good is another trait for which Mr. Proudfit was distinguished. Evidence has been already given of the earnestness of his desire for the advancement of the spiritual interests of men; other proofs will follow of the readiness with which he engaged in any

work which promised to do good. The leading benevolent societies of our country found in him, from the outset of their existence, a steady and cordial supporter. His deep sympathy with those on the frontier settlements, who were destitute of the stated ordinances of the gospel, induced him to make repeated and long journeys to preach to them the unsearchable riches of Christ, and also led him to publish no less than five considerable volumes, chiefly for circulation among them. During his journeys, he sought to improve the casual acquaintances thus formed to the spiritual good of the persons whom he met, and so when spending a few days or a few hours at the house of a friend. In a word, the resolution—"to aim at devising new methods of doing good"—was carried out by him with singular faithfulness.

A truly Catholic spirit was another, and very marked trait. To the Church of his fathers he was strongly attached; and, until the whole of his time required to be devoted to the Colonization cause, he was ever ready to engage in any service for the advancement of the interests of the denomination to which he belonged; but, at the same time, he loved to commune with all of every name who loved our Lord Jesus Christ. In the first years of his ministry, the lines of all denominations were, in some respects,

more rigidly drawn than they are at present. Such was the case when he penned the resolution to say, "grace be with all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." During the last thirty years of his life, perhaps no one enjoyed more extensively, as no one could feel a sweeter relish for, the communion of saints.* It was a subject on which he loved to speak, especially the evidences with which his own extensive contact with Christians of various denominations had furnished him, that, amid the great variety of names, and of external forms and constitutions, there was still substantial unity, one Lord, and one Faith.

Tenderness of the reputation of others is another of the subjects of these resolutions, and was a trait of character for which the subject of this memoir was remarkable. He spake not ill of his neighbour. If he could not speak well of a person, he would at least be silent; but the case was rare indeed in which he could not find some ground of commendation.

* Towards the close of his life, it was a frequent and favourite saying, that, so far as his observation extended, the liberal Christian (in the scriptural meaning of the phrase) is the spiritual Christian.

CHAPTER IV.

DIARY—SPIRITUAL LIFE.

In the latter part of the year 1800, Mr. Proudfit began a diary, which, with occasional interruptions, was continued until within a few weeks of his decease. This record, in some respects, is not so full as could be wished; it gives no information respecting his studies, and rarely refers to passing events, whether of the political or the ecclesiastical world; it is rather a record of the writer's own spiritual life; and though it may not, on this account, be so well fitted to engage the attention of the general reader, it cannot fail to be perused with interest and profit by the private Christian and the spiritually-minded minister.

The great end of Christian biography is to show forth the glory of Christ; to display the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us; and subordinate to this and connected with it, the instruction, the comfort, and the edification of his people. This is especially true of those biographies which contain the diaries or the recorded experiences of eminent Christians. When such records are faithful, they exhibit the dealings of God with the soul, and the exercises

of the renewed soul "God-ward;" and how greatly they are prized by serious Christians, is manifest from the high place which has been assigned to those volumes of biography which contain them.

But while the perusal of these annals of Christian experience is alike pleasant and profitable, we must, at the same time, read them with caution, if we would derive from them the full measure of instruction which they are well fitted to impart. We should remember that, while the great process by which the people of God attain a meetness for heaven is in all cases substantially the same, there is a great diversity in the circumstances which mark its commencement, its progress, and its consummation. Every observing parent will note diversities of temper and propensity in his children; rarely are any two perfectly alike; their treatment and education must hence be, in some respects, different. Thus is it in the family of God: while each one of its innumerable members is a monument of grace, there is not exactly the same development of grace in all. The story of each individual in the glorious company of the redeemed is a distinct and peculiar history. We should not, therefore, be surprised if, in reading the recorded experience of others, we find some features of their spiritual history unlike our own.

The diary of Mr. Proudfit was begun some six years after his entrance into the ministry. By this time he had reached a point in the Christian life when we might say of him that his "heart was established in grace." From one of his resolutions, it appears that, in the first years of his ministry, and probably during the season of his preparation for it, his mind had been in a peculiarly spiritual frame, and that he had been favoured with seasons of intimate communion with God. The diary of his later years, while displaying a mind profoundly sensible of the power of indwelling sin, and ardently longing after more perfect conformity to the image of the Saviour, at the same time indicates a settled conviction that he had been made a partaker of the blessed freedom wherewith Christ makes his people free. But it is needless to anticipate. We shall here introduce some passages from the diary itself, viz.:

"*October* 30*th*, 1800. This day I set apart for the solemn exercises of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. I appropriate that command of Jehovah, my own God in covenant through Jesus Christ, as directed to me in particular, 'turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you.'—Jer., iii., 14. 'Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with

weeping, and with mourning.'—Joel, ii., 12. I desire to turn with all my heart! The Lord God is my witness that I wish to reserve nothing; I desire to be henceforth for him, and not for another: I come with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength, with all my mind; I come with all my understanding, to be employed in looking into and adoring the mysteries of redeeming mercy: with my memory, to retain his heavenly truth; with my will, to be more and more moulded into his most righteous will; with my affections, to centre upon him as my only portion in life, in death, and through eternity. O Lord, accept, through the sacrifice and intercession of thy dear Son, my Saviour, this sincere though unworthy offering.

"I desire to deplore that body of sin and death which so encumbers me; I would particularly mourn over my unbelief, notwithstanding the ample assurances which God has given of his good-will towards me; my enmity, notwithstanding the immensity of his love to me; my pride, notwithstanding my infinite poverty, misery, and blindness; my hypocrisy, my want of sincerity in the service of God, and disinterestedness for his glory. These, and each of them, I now most cordially lament as dishonouring to my Lord, as grieving to that Spirit by whom I have been sensibly sealed to the day of redemp-

tion, and unfriendly to my own comfort and usefulness.

"With fasting and mourning I desire to unite fervent prayer,

"1st. For direction as to the improvement of my time; although it is short and uncertain, yet with a proper use of it my joy and crown through eternity are intimately connected.

"2d. For the Lord's blessing on my labours in the congregation, especially in the exercises of family visitation and public catechising, in which I am now engaged. Luke, v., 10. Ezek., xxxvii., 5, 7.

"3d. For his blessing on the two sermons lately published, and on the tracts now in the press, which are designed for circulation among the frontier settlements. 1 Cor., i., 27, 25.

"4th. For success to the efforts of the missionary society, and for the Divine presence at our meeting on Thursday next. Ps. ii., 8; lxxii., 5, 6, 8, 9.

"These petitions I present in the name of Jesus, my ever-living advocate; and in the confidence of being heard, I will endeavour daily to expect an answer. John, xiv., 13, 14.

"*Friday, October* 31*st*, 1800. Having now finished my annual course of catechising through the congregation, I bless the Lord, who has hitherto helped me, and resign the seed which

has been sown to the gracious Spirit, fully impressed that all means are effectual only as accompanied with his almighty power. May he stoop in his infinite condescension to water this seed with his influences; then it will take root, and spring up to the glory of his own grace, and the salvation of that people whom I love in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"*November* 11*th*, 1800. This day being set apart by the Presbytery for the exercises of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, to be observed by them in a constituted capacity, I desire to spend some time alone at the throne of grace,

"1st. For my brethren in the ministry belonging to the Presbytery; that the Lord would abundantly qualify each of us for our important trust; that he would render us faithful in the discharge of every duty, whether private or public, enabling us to warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom; that he would continue among us that harmony we have long enjoyed, and cause his pleasure to prosper in our hands.

"2d. For myself; that he would endow me with much spiritual wisdom for dealing with the consciences of men. He that winneth souls is wise; much divine skill is requisite for exploring the hidden mystery of iniquity in the human heart; but I am more brutish than any man,

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and have not the knowledge of a man. I desire, therefore, to look up to my Master, both for wisdom and utterance, that he would teach me not only what to say, but how to say it in the most suitable and successful manner. Luke, xxi., 15. 1 Cor., i., 17. Exod., iv., 10–12. Jer., i., 6, 9.

"3d. For the Lord's blessing on that part of the Church with which we are immediately connected; that, while our vacancies are increasing, he would raise up youth full of faith and of the Holy Ghost to supply them. Jer., iii., 15. Luke, x., 2. Eph., iv., 7–9.

"4th. That Israel's God would crown with success measures which are adopted in this and other countries for the spread of the gospel among the heathen, and that those who are already sent forth may be gratefully received."

In these extracts we have the devout utterance of a soul longing for closer communion with its God, and deeply penetrated with a sense of its own unworthiness.

The setting apart a specific time for the exercises of private prayer and fasting, and supplicating the Divine blessing on particular objects, was an exercise which Mr. Proudfit maintained during his whole subsequent life. He was, in an eminent degree, a man of prayer—given "to prayer and the ministry of the word;" this was

his character, not only in the later, but, as this passage of his diary proves, in the earlier years of his ministry.

His profound sense of the inefficacy of means (in themselves) to produce permanent spiritual good is proved by the extracts just given. He was, consequently, by no means satisfied with the perfunctory performance of his ministerial duties ; hence his earnestness in pleading for that Divine influence which alone could render the Word and ordinances effectual to the salvation of sinners, and the edification of the Church, and which *did* descend upon the scene of his pastoral labours in more than ordinary measure.

One of the special topics of supplication here mentioned is, that the *pastoral visitation*, which had just been completed, might be attended with the Divine blessing. This was a work in which Mr. Proudfit greatly delighted, and for which he was admirably fitted. His method of conducting this important part of the pastor's work was such as completely to relieve it of that stiffness which so often attaches to a formal pastoral visit ; he entered upon the work with unaffected ease : the younger members of the family engaged the largest share of his attention, but while seemingly occupied with the children, he was, in fact, speaking in a very impressive manner to the hearts and consciences of the old as

well as the young. In the outset of his ministry, he probably adopted the methods of family examination and catechising which obtained in the Scottish churches of that period; but it was not long before he dropped much of the old formality. The writer can never forget the impression made upon his own mind (when a theological student) during a pastoral visitation of one district of the congregation of Salem, in which he was permitted to accompany his venerable friend. It was the best lecture in pastoral theology on which it was ever his privilege to attend. It is hardly necessary to observe that this was a work in which Mr. Proudfit took great delight; whether at home among his own people, or abroad, he was ever ready to engage in it. Although the congregation of Salem was a large one, he was so much among his people that he knew by name all the children of his charge, and was able to recognise them, which he invariably did whenever he met them. The happy result of this course of ministerial faithfulness was seen in the ardent attachment of his people, old and young, down to the day of his death; in the large number of the youth of his charge who consecrated themselves to the gospel ministry; and in the affectionate veneration in which his memory is now, and will long continue to be held in the town of Salem.

"*Wednesday, November 19th.* I applied to the Lord by prayer, that he would communicate the gifts and graces which he saw most suitable for that period of the world in which my lot is cast, and for that section of his vineyard which he has appointed me to cultivate. Was much encouraged by reading Psalm viii., 2, and from the consideration that the apostles—those eminent instruments of turning sinners to righteousness —were ignorant and illiterate fishermen: was led to conclude that the contractedness of my natural talents, or the obscurity of my situation, was no obstacle with a sovereign God to my usefulness in his Church. He makes foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and weak things of the world to confound the mighty, that no flesh should glory in his presence."

This extract deserves notice, from the peculiar nature of the subject of prayer. It bespeaks a mind whose predominant desire was *usefulness;* and anxious, therefore, to possess those accomplishments which were best adapted to the circumstances in which it had been placed, in the providence of God.

The period at which Mr. Proudfit penned this resolution was, on many accounts, remarkable; not only was it at the beginning of a new century, but it then seemed as if a new order of things were opening, both in the Church and in

the political world. In the Church, the spirit of missions, which since that day has accomplished such splendid triumphs, had just begun to display itself with a life and power unknown for many centuries; while, in the political world, everything appeared to indicate the speedy dissolution of the ancient systems of European despotism. There was much in all the movements of that day to arrest the attention of the serious mind. It was a truly wonderful era. Still, every age has its own peculiar features; and he who would be eminently useful in his day and generation must "have knowledge of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." We cannot forbear asking whether this subject be sufficiently considered by ministers in the present day. Might we not reasonably expect to see more eminent examples of wide-extended usefulness among them if they more generally and earnestly prayed for the *special* qualifications which this age demands?

Had Mr. Proudfit at this time occupied one of the high places of the Church, or had he been called to labour in one of the great cities of our country, there would not, perhaps, have been so much in this extract to excite surprise; but we must remember that he was the pastor of what was then a secluded country congregation. Yet,

in the comparative solitude of Salem, he seems to have been awake to the calls of the stirring age in the midst of which we now are, though it was then just opening; he appears to have been deeply sensible of the responsibilities growing out of the character of the times in which he lived. That for which his heart longed, and for which his prayer was thus early directed unto God, was not mere distinction as a scholar, or even as a theologian, but a fitness to be greatly and widely useful; and all who are intimately acquainted with Mr. Proudfit's history, with his numerous, varied, and constant essays to do good, will readily agree that this request was not unheard.

"*Tuesday, December 2d.* Set apart some time this morning for the following solemn exercises:

"1st. Ascribing praise to that God who has brought me in safety to this place amid many dangers, and has afforded me a reception so cordial on the part of the people. Psalm cxvi., 6, 7, 12.

"2d. Prayer for his return to my soul, reviving in me a spiritual frame, and preserving me from a cold formality in his service. Jer., xxxii., 40. Isai., xliv., 3.

"3d. That he would direct to suitable tracts for circulation for the frontier settlements, and

render me more wise and successful in winning souls to himself.

"*Friday, December* 12*th.* This morning am greatly borne down by a body of sin. Prayer, meditation, reading the Scriptures, and all the other duties of religion, drag heavily along. Alas! how cold and stupid is my heart: I am more brutish than any man, and have not the knowledge of a man. Thou alone, O Lord, knowest the vanity and deceitfulness of my heart, and to thy free, sovereign, omnipotent grace I look for reviving it. Come from the four winds, O breath! and breathe on these languid, lifeless affections, that they may live and centre upon thyself. Surely, where sin abounds in me, although far beyond what man or angel can describe, grace does much more abound through the offices and relations of my ever-blessed substitute.

"*Saturday, December* 13*th.* I was greatly dejected through the prevalence of an evil heart. Such an unusual stupor hath seized both body and mind, that I feel utterly indisposed for any spiritual exercises. Surely, if I reach heaven, I must appear the greatest wonder in all its mansions; the most signal monument of self-moved abounding mercy. O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. Thou, heart-searching Jehovah, art witness that free grace is my only

plea, that I desire to be pardoned of grace, to be sanctified by grace, to be quickened, and comforted, and, finally, saved by grace.

"*December* 14*th, Sabbath evening.* This day I was much embarrassed in the public exercises. My understanding seemed uncommonly clouded, and my affections frozen; I am ashamed even to think of the imperfect manner in which the service was performed. Truly I may pronounce myself less than the least of all saints, lower than the lowest of the Redeemer's servants. Lord, what am I, or what is my father's house, that I should be called to a ministry thus honourable and important? I desire,

"1st. To acknowledge that the Lord is just in this dispensation, and has chastised me less than my iniquities deserve. He might, for my pride and presumption, have rendered me a terror to myself, and to all around.

"2d. I am taught not to rejoice in anything external; in gifts or attainments of any kind, which are so precarious in their exercise, uncertain as the morning cloud, and the early dew which passeth away, but to confide in that God who changeth not; whose love, and covenant, and promises are unalterably the same. Return unto him as thy rest, O my soul; trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength, and place no confidence in the flesh.

"3d. I am taught the necessity of walking more uniformly by faith. We cannot command the natural sun to emit a single ray of light, neither can we cause the shining of the Sun of Righteousness: we cannot revive nature when she languishes, by commanding the leaf to expand in the forest, or the blossom to give its fragrance in the orchard; equally unable are we to give a resurrection to decaying grace in the soul. O Lord, work all my works in me, and for me.

"4th. To set my affections on things above, rejoicing in the prospect of that hour when, relieved from all imperfection, I shall see my God face to face, and know even as I am known. Let the anticipation of this hour, O my soul, be thy consolation while passing through this dreary vale. Thy warfare will soon be accomplished, and the last cloud that intervenes between thee and the Sun of Righteousness shall vanish forever."

In these extracts we have a record of exercises with which every renewed heart is, in a greater or less degree, acquainted. One most valuable lesson to be learned from such a record is the folly of building our hopes upon our inward frames. How changeable are these! one day we feel a love so ardent that we imagine "no waters can ever quench it;" perhaps

the very next our affections seem icebound. Christ is the alone basis of our hope; all our sufficiency is from him; our present life must be one of simple faith in him—a constant "looking unto Jesus." The frequent variation in the feelings of the heart in which grace dwells—the coldness which so often succeeds the warmth of love—what is this but a proof of *our* emptiness—that we are nothing, that Christ is all in all?

"*Monday morning, December 22d.* This morning was much perplexed with a variety of cares, and desire to roll them all on my covenant God, believing that he careth for me. Set apart some time for prayer,

"1st. That the Lord would maintain that life and power in spiritual duties which I have in some measure recovered, and preserve me from indifference in his cause. Rev., ii., 5.

"2d. That he would graciously direct me to a suitable subject for the approaching day of humiliation, and give an outpouring of his Spirit to the congregation on that day.

"3d. That he would undertake for me in all my interests, and direct me as a man, as a minister, as the head of a family, and as the pastor of his Church in Salem.

"This morning I have experienced some measure of the Spirit of grace and supplication, and felt much freedom in committing all that

concerns me to the Divine management; found ardent breathings after progressive sanctification; felt willing to part with every earthly enjoyment, could I only attain to perfection in holiness; read over my resolutions, and renewed my covenant with God, accepting him in all his persons, perfections, and relations, as my guide, portion, and strength; yielded up my all to be utterly at his disposal, and rendered more subservient to the interest of his Church."

With this revived spirit, and with these earnest prayers that the people of his charge might experience "the blessing which God commands in Zion," did Mr. Proudfit close the year 1800. He thus begins the new year:

"*January* 1*st*, 1801. Another year of my life is now gone. Ah! how many hours, and days, and weeks of precious time have been misimproved; time spent either in doing nothing, or nothing to any valuable purpose. Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight can no man living be justified. I bless the Lord this morning, that, notwithstanding innumerable provocations, he has kept me another year from open reproach, and afforded many opportunities for promoting the interests of his Church. Not to me, O Lord, not to me, but to thy name be the glory.

"As I am now entering another period of my

life, I desire to renew the dedication of my all to God and his service in the gospel of his Son. And now, O Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee; make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days—what it is, that I may know how frail I am.

"*March 5th*, 1801. This day undertake my journey for the B——, where I expect to spend some time preaching to that vacancy. I desire to aim at usefulness, promoting the good of souls, whether I call at private houses or occasionally meet with a traveller on the road. I would thus endeavour to be instant in season and out of season, redeeming my time, and fulfilling the ministry which is committed to me by testifying upon every opportunity the gospel of the grace of God.

"*Sabbath evening, March 29th.* This morning was much depressed by a sense of my carnality and deadness; could find no light or comfort in any spiritual exercise. The moment I selected any suitable promise as the subject of meditation, my heart started aside like a deceitful bow; but afterward found some reviving from that declaration of a covenant God, I will heal their backslidings: I have seen his ways, and will heal him. During the exercises of the sanctuary, found some enlargement, particularly in explaining Psalm ciii., 8, 9. "The Lord is

merciful and gracious; slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." How often and sensibly have I experienced the truth of that declaration, "the wind bloweth where it listeth; we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth;" so is every one that is born of the Spirit; so is the Christian in all those revivals which he occasionally enjoys in this state of imperfection.

"*March* 31*st*, 1801. Set apart this day for the purpose of humbling my soul before the Lord,

"1st. Because of my secret sins; my breach of former resolutions, that I have not walked so intimately with God, nor lived for him so entirely as I had solemnly engaged.

"2d. In devout prayer to God, that he would strengthen me with all might in the inner man, and thus render me an able minister of the New Testament; especially that he would direct me, at the present moment, so critical to the Church and our country. Read over my resolutions, and renewed them before the Lord. Sung Ps. cxix., 5–8."

The critical period here referred to probably was that which immediately succeeded the election of Mr. Jefferson as President of the United States. The decided enmity of that eminent person to the Christian faith, though not so

well known at that time as it now is, was more than suspected; and very many, consequently, looked upon his elevation to the presidential chair with the greatest alarm. They deemed it equivalent almost to a national renunciation of the Christian name.

"*September* 21*st*, 1802. This morning I set apart for the purpose of rendering thanks to God for my safe return after a severe indisposition abroad. The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

"2d. Let me realize in this affliction a new proof of my frailty, and the importance of doing each day the work of that day.

"3d. Let me learn from the circumstances of this dispensation, being seized in my absence from home, that I am ignorant not only of the time, but the place of my departure. When I leave my family and friends, I know not whether we shall ever meet again in time. What diligence, therefore, is necessary, instructing, exhorting, and promoting by every possible means their spiritual and eternal interests? When I address my congregation one Sabbath, I know not whether another opportunity shall ever be enjoyed. Let it hereafter be my chief concern to preach in the plain, unaffected language of

the Holy Ghost; anxious not for words which may please, but for truths which may savingly and everlastingly profit them.

"I desire now, so far as I can judge a deceitful heart, to surrender myself, without any reserve, to be the Lord's; it is my unfeigned wish that my body, my soul, my time, my talents, my worldly substance may be so disposed of as that God may be most glorified, and the souls of men most edified. O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord."

The absence here referred to was occasioned by Mr. Proudfit's being appointed by the Synod to supply the pulpit of Dr. Mason, of New-York, who had gone to Europe on a mission in behalf of the Theological Seminary founded by the Associate Reformed Church. Mr. Proudfit remained about two months in the city, and, while there, laboured with as much diligence and zeal as if he had been the regular pastor of the congregation. At this time the Pearl-street Church was vacant, and such was the impression left upon the minds of the people by Mr. Proudfit's labours, that not a few of the most serious and intelligent among them were desirous of calling him as a colleague to Dr. Mason. Such, prob-

ably, would have been the result, and, humanly speaking, a most happy one, had it not been that Dr. Mason, while in Europe, had formed another plan, which, though never carried into effect, was the means of defeating this.

"*January* 1*st*, 1803. This morning read over my resolutions, and find infinite—infinite cause of humiliation. In all things, every day that I live, in every duty which I attempt to discharge, in every thought which passes through my mind, I come short of the glory of God. O Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant; I flee to thy mercy, through the sacrifice of thy dear Son, for the forgiveness of the failures of the past year. I desire to rest on thy promised strength for discharging the duties, and bearing the trials, and resisting the temptations of the coming year. My heart and my flesh fail, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

"*Sabbath evening*, *February* 20*th*, 1803. Upon my return from the sanctuary, was bowed to the very dust through an apprehension that my labours were unprofitable; could discern little evidence that they were successful either for the conversion of sinners, or building up saints to greater attainments in holiness. Was encouraged in revolving Isai., lv., 10: "as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and

watereth the earth, making it to bring forth and bud." Although the snow enricheth the earth and renders it more productive, yet their fruits do not immediately appear; the natural world remains barren for weeks and months after the descent of the snow; and as it is in the natural, so it may be in the spiritual world under the ministry of the Gospel. Although the word preached does not immediately profit, yet, hereafter, through the effectual operations of the Lord the Sanctifier, it may spring forth and bear fruit to life everlasting. Who knows but after my faltering tongue is silent in the grave, and my feeble labours have ceased forever, these truths, through the power of the Holy Ghost, may be rendered effectual to the salvation of these hearers? O Lord, I commend to thy grace all that I have ever been enabled to speak in thy name, whether privately or publicly. Bless it in thine own time, and give me patience to wait thy time. O remember thy word, upon which thou didst enable me to hope soon after I entered thy service in the work of the ministry, and by the recollection of which my soul has often experienced a joy unspeakable: "follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

This is only one of the many records of a dejected heart in view of the seeming barrenness of his pastoral labours. Yet, in general, his

mind appears to have been turned to some one of the many precious promises of the word of God to the faithful minister. Few pastors are to be found who have not almost with anguish of spirit asked, "who hath believed our report?" Undoubtedly there is a measure of anxiety which the faithful minister of Christ cannot but feel—nay, ought to feel; yet it may be doubted if the anxiety which is so often experienced to see the *immediate* fruit of their labours be proper. The times and the seasons of spiritual harvest God hath reserved in his own power. Experience shows that the word of Christ is really producing its mighty work in the minds and hearts of the hearers, even when, for a considerable time, there is no outward manifestation of it. "Be thou faithful unto death"—faithful in the ministry of the word, and in continual prayer, is the Master's command; the success is wholly in his own hand, and He gives it, as to measure, and manner, and time, according to his own sovereign will.

Often as were his seasons of dejection, Mr. Proudfit had ample evidence to believe that his ministry was owned by his Divine Master, and many were the times in which his soul was made to magnify the God of his salvation. Such a record occurs under date of

"*Sabbath evening, March 6th.* This day I have enjoyed unusual comfort and enlargement in public ordinances. I neither expect nor aspire after more exquisite bliss on this side heaven than the employment of preaching a crucified Saviour to perishing sinners under the influences of the Holy Ghost. Felt a temptation, during the morning service, not to cease from the exercise. So abundant was the measure of divine life and strength communicated, that I thought I could have preached to eternity without being exhausted. I can do all things, I know, from repeated sensible experience, through Christ strengthening me. After my return to my own house, felt ardent movements of heart towards all who had been hearing, and would willingly have espoused them one by one to one husband, that they might hereafter be presented as chaste virgins to Christ Jesus.

"*June 26th*, 1804. This morning set apart some time for the exercise of prayer,

"1st. That the Lord would direct in the prosecution of my studies, particularly in preparing that series of discourses which, in an humble reliance on his grace, I am now undertaking. Thou, Lord, hast commanded the light to shine out of darkness; wilt thou not shine upon my heart, and lead me to the truth as it is in Jesus? John, xvi., 13.

"2d. That he would condescend to apply them savingly to the souls of some to whom they may be delivered. I acknowledge I am utterly unworthy of an honour so great; but thou hast received gifts for men, even the rebellious, that the Lord God may dwell among us; and now to the agency of the Lord the Spirit I commit them, that they may become subservient to thy glory in the salvation of sinners. To thee, also, I commit my soul, body, and estate, for thou hast redeemed me, and art worthy of all that I am and am capable of performing. Psalm xlviii., 12–14.

"*July 4th.* Set apart some time for prayer for two churches, S——m and N. Y., which appear critically situated; that the Lord would preside in the midst of them, and direct their deliberations. Psalm cxxi., 6–9. Dan., iv., 35.

"2d. That he would enable me to act a becoming part, and give me entire submission to his will, whatever be the event. Ps. cxxiii., 12; lxxxiv., 11, 12.

"3d. In imploring the Divine blessing on various persons in the congregation who are afflicted either in body or in mind, and have desired an interest in my prayers.

"4th. That he would vouchsafe his presence at the celebration of the ordinance of the Supper shortly to be dispensed in H——, and give ef-

ficacy to the word of his own grace which I am there called to proclaim. Matt., xxviii., 20."

The series of discourses mentioned in the first of these extracts, though not the first publications, formed the first considerable volume which he gave to the world. He had already published two sermons, the first one preached before the Missionary Society, and another, in 1802, before the Synod. In the preface, he observes, "these discourses were prepared for the pulpit during the summer of 1804, with little expectation of being afterward offered from the press. The author, since that time, has occasionally itinerated through the frontier settlements, and in these visits has sincerely deplored the desolate condition of the inhabitants." After mentioning the circumstances which induced him to publish the discourses, he adds, "the subjects, however imperfectly discussed, are without doubt infinitely interesting; and the plan, he humbly hopes, is, in some measure, adapted to the situation of the frontier inhabitants."

The volume is entitled "Discourses on the leading Doctrines and Duties of Christianity; or, the Ruin and Recovery of Man" (1806).

The title of the volume is a sufficient indication of its design, which is to unfold, on the one hand, the fallen and undone condition of man in his natural state, and, on the other, the way of

recovery from all the consequences of the apostacy, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Dr. Proudfit's theology was that of the Reformers and Nonconformists; his turn of mind was too unspeculative and devotional to admit of indulgence in metaphysical reasoning, or dwelling upon any other than the grand essential verities, the belief of which is necessary to salvation. He was the very reverse of a polemic; and hence, though the grand points enlarged upon in the Ruin and Recovery are, the connexion of the human race with the First Adam —the universal corruption of man—the work of the Second Adam as the substitute for the guilty, and the agency of the Holy Spirit in the application of redemption; though these great doctrines of our holy faith are clearly unfolded, they are, at the same time, so closely applied to the conscience and heart of the reader, that any evangelical Christian, whatever may be the particular shade of his creed, cannot fail to peruse them with pleasure and edification. How well this volume was received by the religious public may be judged from the fact that, within less than ten years, it went through three editions. In the last it was enlarged to two volumes, embracing discourses on the principal duties of the Christian life.

The grand subject of these and of all the oth-

er volumes subsequently published by Dr. Proudfit, is Jesus Christ, and him crucified. In almost every sermon the great Redeemer is held up to view as "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree," as opening, through the perfection of his atonement and the merit of his obedience, a fountain where the most guilty and polluted might wash and be clean.

Of course, in such a series there could hardly fail to be a sort of monotony to one who should read the volumes consecutively; but considering the persons for whom they were designed, and the method in which it was expected they would be read—in the social meeting, and at the fireside on the Sabbath evening—there is a very suitable reiteration of the great theme of the gospel, "Christ crucified for us." These sermons are doctrinal, and yet they are eminently practical; doctrinal, inasmuch as their topics are the peculiar doctrines of the gospel; practical, because these topics are discussed, not in a cold and scientific way, but with all the life and warmth which they are so well fitted to inspire; and they are applied with solemn earnestness to arouse the careless, to convict the sinner, to point the inquirer to the Lamb of God; to direct, strengthen, warm, and comfort the Christian in the work and warfare of the present life. There is scarcely a sermon which does not contain

some passages of more than ordinary eloquence. Their style is so plain as to adapt them to the humblest; yet they have sufficient of the graces of rhetoric to commend them to persons of refined taste.

As has been already hinted, we shall not find, either in the earlier or later volumes of Dr. Proudfit, original views or profound discussions. Such was not his aim. Whatever powers of invention he possessed, they seemed, during his whole ministry, to have been exercised mainly for the discovery of methods of doing good. Still, the volumes bear the stamp of a refined and cultivated mind, an acquaintance with classical literature, and especially with the writings of those great lights of the 16th and 17th centuries, whose works will do more to furnish the mind of the Christian pastor than the writings of all the Greek and Latin fathers put together.

In 1804 Mr. Proudfit published another small volume, entitled "The One Thing Needful." It consisted of three discourses, viz., The Barren Fig-tree; The Healing Balm; to which were added, in a subsequent edition, The Spiritual Steward; The Female Labourer; Ministerial Labour and Support; Life and Immortality. One of these—the Female Labourer—was republished in Edinburgh under the auspices of the late excellent Mr. Brown, of Whitburn.

When Mr. Proudfit commenced the publication of these volumes, there was not, as has been already stated, a single tract society in the United States; and although there were a few missionary institutions, yet their means were very limited, and their labourers few. This method of supplying the spiritual wants of the numerous frontier settlements, which were rarely visited by Christian ministers, was vastly more important then than it would be now, when so much is doing, and in so many ways, by all branches of the Church, to supply the wants of the needy at home. In those days it was almost the only practicable method of doing them good, and the review of these works of Mr. Proudfit sets his active and untiring energy in a strong and beautiful light. He had himself been among these poor settlers; he had seen with his own eyes their spiritual destitution; his sympathies were awakened in their behalf, not merely while on the spot, but after his return to his own favoured home, he thought of the scattered sheep in the wilderness, and he set himself to work to do them good. His volumes were published, not with the remotest idea of pecuniary gain, but simply to supply that lack of service which is now supplied by our various benevolent institutions. They were widely circulated in our own and in other states, either gratuitously or at a

price far below their cost. In this good work Mr. Proudfit was aided by several benevolent friends, and particularly by the late D. Bethune, Esq., of New-York, and the late General Van Rensselaer, of Albany.

Besides the productions of his own pen, Mr. Proudfit published in this year (at Salem) an edition of that admirable old work, Guthrie's Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ, for circulation in his own congregation, and among the new settlements. Of the happy results of these benevolent labours, numerous testimonies might be given from men in various parts of the United States; one or two, however, must suffice. A friend in Plattsburg writes, "the tracts I have put in circulation; not given them away, but to pass from neighbour to neighbour, with this instruction endorsed on the title-page. We feel, in behalf of ourselves and our destitute settlement, great obligations to you for your concern and kind care of us; we have not had any one to dispense to us the Word of Life, not even a missionary visit during the whole summer. A very profitable disposition of religious books can be made here, and in the newer and more remote settlements to almost any extent. On the last Wednesday of each month since we parted, I have united with you in the little concert of fasting and prayer." Another friend in Massachu-

setts writes, "I ought, long ago, to have written to you, and acknowledge the reception of a number of books which you were so obliging as to send me. I have read them with much pleasure, and, I trust, profit. Others have read them, and several of them have literally been worn out by frequent perusal."

Mr. Proudfit began the year 1805 by a missionary visit to the Oneida and the Stockbridge Indians. Among the first-named tribe, the gospel had been preached so early as 1766, by the Rev. Mr. Kirkland, who laboured among them for a long time under the patronage of the society in Scotland for propagating Christian knowledge. Of the privations to which he was exposed, Mr. Kirkland gives a graphic account in a letter written in 1767: "from week to week I am obliged to go with the Indians to Oneida Lake to catch eels for my subsistence. I have lodged and slept with them till I am as lousy as a dog. Flour and milk, with a few eels, have been my only living. Such diet, with my hard labour abroad, is not sufficient to support nature; my strength, indeed, begins to fail. My poor people are almost starved to death. There is one family of four persons whom I must support the best way I can, or they would certainly perish. Indeed, I would myself gladly fall upon my knees for such a bone as I have often

seen cast to the dogs. My constitution is almost broken; my spirits sunk; yet my heart still bleeds for these poor creatures. I had rather die than leave them alone in their present miserable condition."* Amid privations like these, and sometimes with his life in peril, this excellent man continued at his post, and in the course of a few years his heart was made glad by the promise that the wilderness would soon rejoice, and blossom as the rose. In a letter dated December, 1770, and written by three of the Oneida chiefs, they say, "the holy word of Jesus has got place among us, and advances. Many have lately forsaken their sins to appearance, and turned to God." Mr. Kirkland died at Paris, Oneida county, 28th March, 1808, aged sixty-seven, having spent forty years as a missionary among the Indians.

The mission among the Stockbridge Indians was commenced by the Rev. John Sargeant in 1734, during the residence of that tribe on the banks of the Housatonic River. Its history is remarkable for the distinguished men who have been connected with it. Mr. Sargeant, its founder, who died in 1749, in the thirty-ninth year of his age, is described as "a man of such singular worth and varied excellence, that his equal is rarely met with in the Church of Christ. The

* History of Missions, i., 139.

brightness of his genius, the extent of his learning, the sweetness of his temper, the agreeableness of his conversation, the strength and fervour of his zeal, the unweariedness of his diligence, were the least of those qualities which distinguished and ennobled his character." He was succeeded, in 1751, by the great Jonathan Edwards, whose fame is in all the churches; for six years this mission was under the charge of this illustrious man, and it was during these years that he wrote his two great works on the Freedom of the Will, and on Original Sin. Soon after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, a portion of the tribe, accompanied by the Rev. John Sargeant, son of the founder of the mission, removed to a tract of land six miles square, which had been offered to them by the Oneida Indians, where they built a town which they called New Stockbridge. In 1796 their number was about 300, all of them nominal Christians, but only thirty of them members of the Church. Mr. Sargeant was pastor at the time of Mr. Proudfit's visit, as appears from the diary.

"*Thursday evening, January* 10*th*, 1805. This afternoon had an opportunity of preaching to the Stockbridge Indians, from 1 Tim., i., 15; 'this is a faithful saying,' &c.; was much affected at witnessing their pitiable situation in a temporal respect, being destitute of almost every

earthly enjoyment, and was led to admire the sovereignty which makes the distinctions among men: felt deeply moved with compassion towards their souls, and found some enlargement in expostulating with them to receive that Jesus who came into the world to save sinners of all nations indiscriminately. Spent the evening with the Rev. John Sargeant, missionary to that tribe, and was highly entertained with the pious conversation of himself and family; was led forward, in imagination, to the joys of that world where we shall be admitted, not only to the fellowship of Jesus, the mediator, but of the redeemed of all countries and ages. During the evening, was gratified in hearing a narrative of the labours of the elder Mr. Sargeant, former missionary to the same tribe of Indians in New-England, and with the perusal of letters addressed from Rev. A. Burr to Mrs. Sargeant upon the decease of her truly excellent and laborious husband, dated 1749. Could not refrain from reflecting on the advantages of these holy men who were born so long before us, and admitted sooner to the communion of that Being who is the fountain of glory and bliss,

> "'Safe landed on that blissful shore,
> Where pilgrims meet to part no more.'

My soul, be thou diligent in following those who,

through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises."

We shall now proceed to give additional extracts from Mr. Proudfit's diary, which will serve to illustrate some of the more remarkable features of his character as a Christian, and as a Christian minister.

"*Saturday, March 2d.* This morning set apart some time for meditation and prayer, that the Lord would countenance me in preparing for the press the 'Ruin and Recovery of Man.' I fall before thee as less than the least of thy ministering servants or saints. I am a child, Lord, and utterly incapable of thinking, or speaking, or writing for thy glory or the advantage of others, only as I am enlightened by the Spirit of Wisdom. It is not deeper darkness in the natural world without the influences of the sun, than it is in my soul without thy grace to illumine; but thou hast committed the treasure to earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of thyself, and not of us. I now present myself to thee as an empty vessel; impart to me such measure of the spiritual treasure as appears suited to the age in which I live, and that section of thy Church in which thou hast appointed me to labour. I know that in a covenant Jehovah there is a fulness inexhaustible, and that he is not the least impoverished by imparting; I know, also, that

he will have a Church on earth while sun and moon endure, and that he will employ men as instruments of her edification, and why not me, insignificant and unworthy as I am? Found encouragement from 2 Cor., iii., 5, 6. James, i., v.

"*Thursday, July 2d.* Agreed with two Christian friends to spend one hour this afternoon, each in his own closet, commending to God a domestic concern of great importance. We mutually agreed not to presume to dictate to a sovereign God, but merely implore him to manage it in the manner most conducive to the general interests of all concerned.

"We previously conversed with each other on the following portions of Scripture, which we considered suitable and encouraging in our application to our Father's throne: Psalm cxxxviii., 8. Matt., xviii., 19, 20. Concluded with singing Ps. lxxiii., 23–26.

"*Wednesday, October 30th*, 1805. This day began to revise the series of discourses for publication, and, therefore, set apart some time for the exercise of special prayer,

"1st. That the Lord would direct me, would instruct me in the mysteries of his gospel, giving me suitable apprehensions of the ruin of man by nature, and the method of his recovery through the substitution and sufferings of his dear Son.

"2d. That he would direct to such discussion of each text as may be most agreeable to the analogy of faith, and most adapted to the edification of serious souls.

"3d. That he would give bodily strength to execute the work, and accept of this humble attempt to advance the honour of his great Name, and promote the best interests of men."

This volume consists of sixteen sermons; the preface bears date, Salem, September, 1806. The design of the author in this work will be learned from the following extract: "although the subjects illustrated in the following pages have often occupied the pen of controversy, yet I have cautiously avoided entering the field. To have stated and answered the various objections, must have swelled the work to an immoderate size, and, in a great measure, have defeated the design of the publication. My intention was not to contend with the adversaries of our salvation, but, if possible, by a plain exhibition of Divine truth, to espouse sinners to the Saviour, and advance his own children to the measure of the stature of his fulness." The preceding passages from the diary show in what spirit the work was prepared for the press; the din of controversy between Calvinists and Hopkinsians was then beginning to be heard; but the author of the Ruin and Recovery did not enter the field

in the character of a polemic, but as one whose "heart's desire and prayer to God was" that men might be saved. These sermons will also serve to show the style of Mr. Proudfit's ministrations among his own people, as it appears from the preface that they were originally preached to them in the course of the year 1804.

Under this date he thus sings of the goodness of the Lord.

"*August 1st*, 1806. This morning set apart some time for meditation and prayer:

"1st. That the Lord would revive his work in my own soul, enabling me to live more entirely above this vain, polluted, and polluting world: encouraged by Hosea, xiv., 4–6. John, iv., 14.

"2d. That he would revive his work in the congregation, where, alas! iniquity abounds, and the love of many is waxing cold.

"3d. That, as he has produced a very material change in my temporal circumstances by the increase of property, he would direct to the most prudent and profitable use of my talents. O Lord, the earth is thine, and the fulness thereof, and thou givest these treasures to whomsoever thou wilt. I am only a steward of thy bounty, and desire to occupy them to the honour of thee—the sovereign, liberal giver—to the interests of my generation, and to my own rejoicing at the great day of the appearing of Je-

sus Christ. Lord, I am THINE; *thou* didst create me; thou hast preserved me all my life long to this day; thou hast conferred upon me blessings without number of a temporal nature; thou hast afforded me the comfortable assurance of the salvation of thy dear Son; thou hast counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; thou hast opened for me many doors of usefulness, and crowned me with many pledges of thine approbation in discharging the duties of this office. What shall I—what can I render to thee for all these benefits? Could I offer thee ten thousand lives, I must still remain an infinite, eternal debtor. Since, therefore, I have but one life, and that very short and uncertain, may I think of nothing but devotion to the service of my God and my generation. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, and let thy judgments help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments."

"*Sabbath morning, February* 21*st*, 1808. An unpleasant occurrence has for some time disturbed the peace of the session and congregation; I have, therefore, agreed with a few Christian friends to spend an hour in committing it by prayer to Him who is the wise sovereign and gracious disposer of all events. Oh! what condescension has our heavenly Father displayed in that invitation, 'call upon me in the day of

trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' Psalm l., 15. Special promises are made by our Divine advocate to the united supplication of his children. Matt., xviii., 19. In reflecting upon this occurrence, I was supported by the consideration that Jehovah loves the Church, that he has purchased it with his own blood, that her interests are, therefore, infinitely dear to him, and he will give her peace so far as shall conduce to his honour and her advantage ; found comfort from the consideration that the member who occasioned this trouble was a child of the spiritual family ; therefore, felt an assurance that he would be brought to a conviction of his error, would obtain the forgiveness of his offence, and be restored to the paths of righteousness.

" By this seemingly adverse occurrence, my soul has been roused from a torpid, lifeless frame, into which it had sunk ; my pride has been mortified, my patience has been tried, and, I hope, improved. I have been more weaned from men, because this affliction came from one with whom I had long been in habits of intimacy, with whom I had frequently mingled sweet counsel in the house of God, and in our own houses. I have been taught experimentally the truth which I had long believed, and often preached, that we are strangers and sojourners upon earth, and am

constrained to long for a translation to that world where no jar or jealousy shall ever enter; where nothing shall interrupt our peace with God or with each other, but harmony and love shall reign forever."

Happy would it be for the Church if congregational difficulties and cases of discipline were more frequently dealt with after this manner. We too often forget that the Church is infinitely dearer to her exalted Head and Redeemer than she can be to her most eminent and holy members or ministers.

"Same day, preached at Rupert from John, vi., 27. 'Labour for that meat which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give you.' Had some freeness in exhibiting the fulness of Jesus and his salvation.

"On the forenoon of *Tuesday* repaired to *Whitehall*, and in the evening preached from Isai., lv., 3. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.' The people in both settlements appeared very affectionate, seemingly hungry for the bread of life, but destitute of any one to dispense it statedly. The harvest is indeed plenteous, and the fields are becoming white. There is, in many of our frontier settlements, an uncommon thirst for the waters of the sanctuary. On my return, I called to spend some time with Mrs. H——, a

friend in Jesus, who being absent, I was led to stop at a public house. The landlady I soon discovered to be much exercised to godliness; her conversation on the great doctrines of practical religion was truly refreshing and edifying. She was a Baptist by profession, and an utter stranger until that interview took place; yet I soon felt towards her as a sister in the spiritual family; she appeared incomparably nearer and dearer to me than hundreds of Presbyterians who are called by the same name, and encircled within the same ecclesiastical pale with myself. Christians of all communions, of all conditions, of all colours, are really of one body in Christ, and members one of the other. Their bond of union is love to Jesus, their common Saviour and Lord; and is, therefore, not only intimate, but indissoluble, unaltered, and unalterable by any outward variety of sentiment, or circumstances, or place."

In this extract there is an illustration of that truly catholic temper by which Mr. Proudfit was distinguished. To that branch of the Church with which he was connected he was warmly attached; yet he was not a sectarian: he could and did say from the heart, "grace be with all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." While we cannot be too deeply imbued with this catholic spirit—this love of the brethren for

Jesus's sake—we may, at the same time, underrate the importance of that particular department of the Church to which we belong. Catholicism and unsectarianism are by no means equivalent terms.

"*September 8th*, 1808. I set apart this morning for the exercises of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, for the purpose of presenting before the Lord that trial which has long pressed heavily upon me, and therefore I would,

"1st. Confess and mourn over my sins which are the procuring cause of this and all other calamities. Isai., lix., 1, 2.

"2d. I acknowledge that the Lord would be just in the actual infliction of this threatened evil, and ten times greater. Ps. ciii., 10.

"3d. In fervent expostulation that, for his name's sake and for his Son's sake, he would condescend to avert this scourge, and to his name I will aim at ascribing the glory of the deliverance. Job, xxxiii., 26. Jer., xxxiii., 3. Heb., iv., 14–16.

"*October 19th.* Set apart this morning for the exercise of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, and desire,

"1st. To be humbled before the Lord for the sin of my nature and life. Ps. li., 1–5.; cxxx., 2, 3.

"2d. To commit to his management that matter which has so deeply interested me for some

time past, and desire that the Lord would prepare me for the issue. He is infinitely wise, and knows what is most conducive to my good and his own glory; he is very pitiful, and of tender mercies, and 'will not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.'

"3d. I desire to be deeply impressed with a sense of my dependance upon God, and my obligations to be devoted wholly to the advancement of his cause in the edification of his Church; I therefore sincerely pray that he would direct me to spend the few days, or months, or years which await me in the manner best calculated to promote these ends.

"4th. I earnestly look up to the Lord for special blessings on my family, my friends, my congregation, on students of theology, on the ministers of religion, and on Zion throughout the whole world.

"*November* 16*th*, 1808. This morning have been taking into consideration various providences which have occurred agreeably to my wishes, and which I desire to record to the praise of the Divine condescension, and for my own encouragement in seasons of darkness and adversity. Truly, he is faithful who has promised; he is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. I find that everything is prosperous; that I enjoy a peace which the world

can neither give nor take away, in proportion as I live by faith, resting on the promises, the power, and faithfulness, and tender mercies of a covenant Jehovah."

These extracts are given in the order in which they occur, and serve to show how "in all things, by prayer and supplication, he made known his requests unto God."

In the latter part of this year Mr. Proudfit published another small work, entitled "Our Danger and Duty: two Sermons, delivered 30th of November, 1808, being the day appointed by the Presbytery of Washington for Fasting and Prayer, on account of the alarming aspect of Divine Providence towards our country." With some brief extracts, containing sentiments as well suited to the present as to any former crisis of our country, we shall close this chapter. In considering the crimes with which we are, as a nation, chargeable, the author observes, "may not the records of our courts of justice testify how common are the crimes of false swearing and forgery—crimes peculiarly offensive to God, and which tend to sap the very foundation of social order among men? Do not our daily prints announce the very alarming increase of bankruptcies in our country? Probably one thousand instances of private failure occur now where one occurred twenty years ago. This fact evin-

ces the corruption of public morals, as these failures must ordinarily proceed either from a concealment of property with a view to defraud the creditor, or from a mode of living utterly beyond our ability." "Permit me to notice another cause of the Divine displeasure, those bitter contentions, those mutual reproaches, which abound among us. What are our seasons of election but seasons of detraction and defamation, by which the passions of each other are inflamed? What liberties are frequently taken in reproaching public men, and misrepresenting public measures! Does not the living God explicitly forbid the indulgence of 'hatred, variance, emulations, wrath?' An untender, unforbearing spirit between man and man is always inexcusable, but it is peculiarly offensive when cherished by those who are citizens of the same commonwealth, whose civil and social interests are intimately blended together. In republican forms of government, where public virtue is the great pillar on which *government* rests, a degree of party spirit may be profitable; one portion of the community thus becomes a 'watch-tower' to the other; but when the spirit becomes outrageous and infuriate, when jealousy pervades every class of the community, and extinguishes mutual confidence, it becomes equally reproachful and ruinous."

The following letter of Dr. Mason did not come to hand in time to be inserted in its proper place, yet it deserves not to be wholly omitted, on account of its connexion with the history of the Episcopal controversy of 1805. It explains the origin of the Christian's Magazine, a periodical of which Dr. Mason was the principal editor, and in which some of the best productions of his pen, viz., his essays on Episcopacy, on the Church, and on the use of Lots, made their first appearance. The late Drs. Livingston, Romeyn, and M'Leod, also largely contributed to its pages. It is dated

"New-York, 5th April, 1805.

"My dear Brother,

"With this you will receive four copies of proposals for a new periodical work. You will discern at once its general design, which I trust you will approve. It has become absolutely necessary to employ measures of defence against the outrages of the hierarchists. We have long treated them with the greatest courtesy, even while they showed no disposition towards an exchange of civilities; but there is a point beyond which concession becomes dishonour, and to that point matters have now arrived. Treated with incessant contumely from the pulpit and the press, their ministrations branded as impieties, and themselves as thieves and robbers, the

Presbyterian clergy cannot sit down any longer under Episcopal abuse without sacrificing their consciences and authenticating their disgrace.

"It is not intended so much to wage war against the prelatists as to establish the Scriptural truth. This seems to be present duty. It is no secret that few Presbyterians are well acquainted with the principles and reasons of their own church order, and, therefore, they are more vulnerable on this than on any other point. Some have undoubtedly laboured too much in mere externals, and others, running into the opposite extreme, pass them over too slightly. I think this is too common, and a sinful omission on the part of most evangelical ministers. Laudably bent upon the precious doctrines of the cross, which directly bear upon the sinner's hope, they have insensibly dropped the habit of instructing their flocks in the constitution and arrangements of the Christian Church. This is certainly for a lamentation; it has thrown disrespect upon the Redeemer as King over the holy hill of Zion, and the churches on both sides of the Atlantic are smarting under the effects of their negligence. As we shall connect various other matters with disquisitions concerning Church government, we flatter ourselves that the work will prove acceptable to the bulk of serious readers, and we look for aid in the prosecution of it from breth-

ren who are contending under the same banners against a common foe. I am, my dear brother, with much affection, yours,

"J. M. Mason."

From this letter it appears that the Episcopal controversy of 1805 was begun, not by Presbyterians, but by prelatists. The former made no attacks upon diocesan Episcopacy; they did not deny the validity of Episcopal ordination. During the whole discussion they acted only in self-defence. Dr. Mason, no doubt, entered into it with warmth, and he did not always express his sentiments in the gentlest terms; but at no time did he allow his zeal to get so much the better of his judgment as to induce him to unchurch his opponents, or to deny their right to the precious liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free.

The same cause which produced the controversy of 1805 has led to its revival in our own day, viz., prelatic assumption and exclusiveness. The difference between Episcopalians and Presbyterians respecting the government of the Church is doubtless a proper subject of discussion, but to all right-minded men it presents no reason why they should not recognise each other as Christians, and, in so far as they have attained, walk by the same rule, and mind the

same things. It would be a strange thing should one who believes ordination to be by Divine right, an act of the presbytery, affirm that such men as Ridley, Latimer, and Hall never were ministers of Christ. Equally strange should it be that any can be found professing to have learned the truth in Jesus, who, after reading the records of the experience, and the labours of such a man as Dr. Proudfit, can deny that he was a true minister of the Lord Jesus. Such a denial may, on either side, seem to be demanded by the *jure divino* theory; but, however logical the consequence may appear, its utter falsity is proved by the fact that the Church's Head has owned these men as his ministers, and has stamped their ministry with the seal of his approbation.

CHAPTER V.

PERSONAL TRIALS, PASTORAL SUCCESS.

From the interest which Mr. Proudfit took in missions, and his readiness to engage in the work of a domestic missionary at a time when it was tenfold more arduous and self-denying than it is now, it might be inferred that he would rejoice with a special joy at the formation of that board, which has been so eminently owned of God—the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Into the details of its interesting history it would be out of place to go; this much, however, may be observed, that its early history affords a fine illustration of the doctrine of a particular Providence, and shows what vast results may be dependant upon circumstances seemingly unimportant. The perusal of a missionary sermon by the late Dr. John Livingston is said to have been the means of directing the attention of Newel, Mills, and their companions to the wants and the woes of the heathen world. The subsequent history of the Board presents us with a striking instance of the power of faith, and one to which the subject of this memoir was fond of re-

curring. When these young men proposed to go forth as the missionary representatives of the American Church, it was at first deemed questionable whether the Church would be able to sustain them, and recourse was had to the London Society for aid in the event of its being needed; but these fears were soon dismissed: the churches went forward to the work, confident in the resources of their Divine Head; and now, as we contemplate the vast increase of the missionary spirit, and the success which has been vouchsafed to the Board in the East and the West, we may well exclaim, "what hath God wrought!"

Of this Board, Mr. Proudfit was early chosen a corporate member, and from first to last its managers had his fullest confidence and warmest affection. In 1817, he indeed cordially united with others in organizing the United and Foreign Missionary Society; but he did not look upon the latter as in any way the rival of the former; he no doubt deemed, and most justly, every such institution, though independent, the auxiliary of others, and fitted to bring a larger measure of exertion to bear upon the one great object—the publication of the gospel among all nations. To the American Board Mr. Proudfit was an early and large contributor; for many years he regularly attended its annual meetings,

and was accustomed to speak of those seasons as among the most delightful of his life.

In 1812 Mr. Proudfit was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity by two colleges, Middlebury and Williams, the reason of which double conferment will be explained by the following letter from the late President Fitch, of Williams:

"Williams College, September 23d, 1812.

"Rev. and Dear Sir,

"I have the pleasure to inform you officially that at our last commencement the corporation did themselves the honour to confer on you the degree of Doctor of Divinity. You, sir, and your friends may think this measure unusual, as the same degree was last year conferred on you at Middlebury; but it is a standing rule in our Board to confer no doctorate unless the person on whom it is conferred be nominated by three members at a previous meeting of the Board, and the nomination accepted. This was your case. We did not then know that Middlebury had anticipated us in the honour we intended to you and to ourselves; nor did this, in our view, make it improper that we should proceed. You will thus be able duly to appreciate our intentions.

"I am, dear sir, yours, &c.,

"Ebenezer Fitch.

"Rev. Alexander Proudfit, D.D."

During this year some correspondence was had with Dr. Proudfit in relation to the vice-presidency of Princeton College. From the papers which remain, it does not appear that a formal offer of the office was made; but, by a letter of the late Dr. Taylor, of New Brunswick, it appears that the attention of the Trustees of that venerable institution had been turned towards Dr. Proudfit as a person well qualified for the post, and a semi-official inquiry was made whether the invitation, if tendered, would be accepted. What reply was made to this letter by Dr. Proudfit we are unable to state, no copy of it being found among his papers.

One of the essential qualifications of a Christian bishop, according to the judgment of Paul, is the bringing up his children in the fear of God. The following is one of many extracts which might be made from the diary, showing Dr. Proudfit's parental faithfulness, and how earnestly he longed after all the members of his family in Christ Jesus:

"*September* 22*d*, 1813. This is the birthday of my eldest son. I have, therefore, resolved to spend the morning in prayer with him and the family, offering him and all my dear children to a covenant God. O my father's God, and thou who hast been my God and Father, accept the dedication of these pledges of thy love; may

they be all thine, in soul and body, in time and through eternity. Early sanctify them, as thou didst Samuel, Josiah, Jeremiah, and Timothy, and thus keep them from those follies which are common to youth, and raise them up for usefulness in thy Church when my feeble labours are ended. . . . . That he would perfect all that concerns me, and especially seal with his approbation that volume which is nearly finished, and the others which have been published."

The following are his reflections on a silent Sabbath, under date of

"*Sabbath, August 7th,* 1814. Am this day prevented by indisposition from attending on the duties of the sanctuary, although the pulpit is supplied by one of my brethren. The Lord is righteous in laying me aside, and denying me the honour of speaking publicly in his name. How often have I been silent when I might and ought to have been proclaiming his great salvation! How often have I preached by *constraint,* not *willingly,* not with a becoming importunity and affection, the unsearchable riches of the Saviour! I have too frequently indulged a cold, indifferent spirit, when my soul should have been wholly absorbed in zeal for my Master's glory, and solicitude for the souls of men perishing in their sins! O Lord, I have been truly an unprofitable servant; it is because thy patience is infinite that

I am not withered to the root as a cumberer of thy vineyard.

"But while my soul is truly humbled under the present chastisement of a covenant God, I adore his condescension for all the opportunities he has afforded me to recommend Jesus and his plenteous redemption. Seeing I have this ministry, as I have received mercy, I faint not.

"Nearly twenty years have elapsed since I was separated to preach the everlasting gospel; although possessing a frail constitution, I have enjoyed an uncommon measure of health, many opportunities for promoting his cause, and have experienced seasons of enlargement in exhibiting the Saviour, too precious to be forgotten in time or in eternity. The pulpit has frequently been to me as the suburbs of heaven, and I have enjoyed a degree of delight in entreating sinners to be reconciled to God which cannot be described. Among all the mercies received from the Lord Jesus Christ, I esteem this as the crown, that he has accounted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, and that in his providence he has opened so many doors for usefulness. It is condescension, not only divinely rich, but distinguishing. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

"It is now my desire to arise from this bed of affliction with renewed resolutions to live more

entirely for the Lord. I would rejoice in the recovery of my health chiefly, yea, *only* as it affords a prospect of doing a little good for my family, and for that Church which the Saviour purchased with his own blood. 'To me henceforth to live, may it be Christ.' I do consider the advancement of his glory in the salvation of souls by the consecration of every member of my body and power of my mind, and by the most prudent management of my outward estate, as my duty, honour, and interest. Now may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. Amen."

The path of the just through this life, while divinely compared to that of the growing light of the morning, is still often darkened by the clouds of sorrow. Many of the preceding extracts attest that Dr. Proudfit was favoured with the light of God's countenance in an eminent degree; indeed, they all breathe the spirit of adoption; but it would have been strange indeed had it been all sunshine with him: "if ye are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." "The grievous dispensation" spoken of in a subsequent* extract would appear, from the frequent references to it in the diary, to have been long threatened; repeatedly did he set apart special seasons of pray-

* See p. 157.

er on account of it, nor were his prayers in vain.

During the year 1813 the Lord was pleased to crown the labours of his servant with a special outpouring of his Spirit. The only reference to it in the diary is under date of July 6, 1813. "This morning set apart one hour for prayer, that the Lord would prosper me in my studies; especially that he would aid me in finishing the volume I am now preparing for the press, and *that he would continue and increase that attention to religion which appears in the congregation.*" In this connexion, we may introduce an extract of a letter to the Rev. Dr. Sprague, of Albany, in which Dr. Proudfit gives some interesting notices of the revivals in his congregation, together with his views on the general subject. "This (1832) is the thirty-eighth year of my ministerial labours in Salem. We have uniformly been in the habit of dispensing the ordinance of the Supper four times a year, and, so far as I can recollect, have never had a sacramental occasion without some addition to our members; but at different times during this long period we have enjoyed what would now be pronounced 'a revival of religion.' The refreshing influences of Divine grace descended silently and softly upon the heritage of the Lord, like the showers of spring after the

dreariness and barrenness of winter. One of these occasions was in the year 1796, when a very unusual influence apparently accompanied the outward dispensation of the Word, sealing it upon the souls of both saints and sinners. A similar occasion occurred about six years afterward, and another still more memorable visitation of the Spirit was enjoyed in the year 1815. During all these seasons of enlargement to myself, and of spiritual joy to the children of adoption, and of 'the espousals of others to Jesus as their husband,' no extra efforts were used; no brethren from other towns were called in to our aid; but the work advanced silently and regularly, promoted exclusively, under the Divine blessing, by the ordinary ministration of ordinances, private and public. Yet, during the whole course of my ministry, I have never been favoured with seasons more delightful in their recollection; none the results of which shall I contemplate with more joy in that day when the final account of my stewardship will be required. Contemplated in a moral or spiritual light, the work on these occasions might be compared to that gradual yet perceptible reanimation which pervades the vegetable world amid the vernal showers and the refreshing influences of the returning sun, when the face of nature is clothed with fresh verdure, and the trees which had

stood barren are adorned with blossoms and fruit. These might emphatically be called 'times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord;' and yet I know of no particular cause, except that on the last occasion, the revival of the Lord's work appeared to come as an answer to extraordinary importunity in prayer. Few churches during this period, perhaps, have been more honoured for raising up young men to adorn the ministerial office—men full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, who now appear as burning and shining lights in various parts of our country. On one occasion, in the autumn of 1815, six youth took their seats together at the sacramental table who are now exercising the ministry of reconciliation, and some of them with more than ordinary success. These facts I feel constrained to notice, for the purpose of correcting that novel and prevailing opinion that religion cannot flourish without some special and unusual effort. In 1824, a revival of a different character from those already mentioned appeared. Several persons residing in different parts of our town were suddenly and almost simultaneously struck with deep convictions of sin. This arrested the attention of the friends of religion; meetings for prayer and conference were held almost every day in the week, and generally crowded to overflowing. With respect to the fruits of these re-

vivals, I have almost uniformly remarked that, where the subjects had been early and competently instructed, the impressions have been permanent; those of this character who assumed the profession of religion have been enabled to persevere; but in other instances the excitement has too often been transient as 'the morning cloud and the early dew;' the latter class, like those in the parable of the sower, I have frequently seen receive the Word with joy, but not having root in themselves, endured for a while, and afterward returned to the world. From these facts, founded on long observation, I have been particularly impressed with the importance of early instruction."

The volume alluded to in the last extract from the diary is designed, as the author states in the preface, "to explain and enforce those means by which the salvation of God is ordinarily commenced, and carried on, and completed in the souls of his favoured children," and, like most of the volumes which preceded it, it is dedicated "to the inhabitants of the frontier settlements." It was published in the autumn of 1813.

Two years afterward, Dr. Proudfit was induced to prepare a new and uniform edition of his writings. It was published during the year 1815, in four volumes; and when it is remembered that he was then but in the twentieth year of his min-

istry; how faithfully he performed the manifold duties of a large country parish, and how often he was absent from home on those missionary tours to the new settlements in which he so greatly delighted, it may emphatically be said that these volumes constitute a noble monument to his diligence and devotedness as a servant of Christ. The work of republication, like all his other works, was begun and continued in prayer, as the following extracts from the diary show:

"*January* 14*th*, 1815. Resolved to spend this forenoon in the duties of fasting, humiliation, and prayer.

"1st. In lamenting that, although my opportunities have been so great, I have done so little for my God or his Church.

"2d. In imploring the Divine blessing on my ministry, and particularly on that new edition of my works which is now in the press.

"3d. In committing to the Lord's management a very awful and perplexing occurrence which has lately taken place in the congregation.

"*Saturday evening*, *May* 13*th*, 1815. This afternoon the printer has finished the new edition of my works, in four volumes. I desire, therefore, to employ one hour,

"In setting up once more my ebenezer, and adoring the Divine sovereignty in commit-

ting the treasure of his gospel to earthen vessels, and particularly to admire and adore his condescension in honouring me who am the least and most unworthy, either to speak or write in his name.—Eph., iii., 8. I now commit these discourses to the sovereign, absolute disposal of the great Head of the Church; may he send them wherever they may be most instrumental in promoting the honour of his name whose I am, and the salvation of souls to which I desire to be devoted.—Ps. clxiii., 69. Luke, xii., 6, 7. Thou, Spirit of life and of power, accept this humble attempt for diffusing the savor of the name of Jesus; all that is wanting in them, graciously supply, and whatever has been sinful as to the motive or execution, graciously forgive. If I, who am the least of thy servants, have acted presumptuously in undertaking to write on these mysteries, which are beyond the comprehension of angels, thou art gracious to pardon this presumption; if I have sought my own glory rather than the glory of Jesus, in the riches of thy grace forgive this self-seeking, although a very aggravated impiety; if I have failed in this attempt to illustrate these interesting doctrines, thou canst make foolish things to confound the wise; if I am chargeable with weakness in unfolding and applying these truths to the understanding and the heart, thou canst make

weak things to confound the mighty, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be honour and dominion forever. Amen."

To this republication of his works it is probable that Dr. Proudfit was led in consequence of an earnest letter upon the subject from his venerable friend and theological instructer, the late Dr. Livingston, who thus wrote to him in 1813:

"With great satisfaction I have read the volume of sermons which, in the preface you inform us, were published chiefly for the benefit of the inhabitants upon our frontiers, whom you repeatedly visited and found destitute of gospel ordinances. It is a work excellently calculated to instruct the ignorant in the principles of our holy religion, and has been, no doubt, of eminent service to the people for whom, in the first instance, it was intended; but it deserves a wider circulation, and as the book has become scarce, permit me to suggest the propriety of a new edition. I observe you have selected some of the principal doctrines of the gospel, and am happy to find that you have treated each of them with sufficient perspicuity, and applied them with zeal and faithfulness. It would have been improper in popular discourses to descend to minute explanations, or bring forward the whole class of arguments in support of each dogma; and it

would mar the work to enter into controversies, and distract the common reader with a critical examination of terms which he could scarcely comprehend, or with laboured answers to objections, by none of which, perhaps, he had ever been disturbed. A correct statement of the truth, supported by the decided and unequivocal authority of the sacred Scriptures, and expressed in a plain and familiar style, is most eligible, and certainly best adapted to inform the uninstructed, direct convinced sinners, and edify believers. This plan I see you have adopted, and I do not hesitate to express my cordial approbation of the volume, with a wish that similar discourses were more numerous, and disseminated throughout the land. My affection for you, which has increased from your early youth, and my expectation that your sermons will be favourably received, and prove extensively beneficial, prompt me to mention the subject of a new edition, and, I am sure, will supersede the necessity of any apology. The Divine Redeemer, our precious Lord and Master, make his grace to be sufficient for you, enlarge your sphere of usefulness, and give you much joy and peace in believing! I bless you, and am most respectfully, dear sir, yours, &c.

"J. H. LIVINGSTON."

Many and pleasing were the testimonials which Dr. Proudfit received to the blessed results of his writings, not only among those for whom they were specially intended, but in many other parts of the land. The Rev. Dr. Church, of Pelham, New-Hampshire, thus writes to him in 1817: "I trust you will excuse the freedom of an unknown and unworthy brother in addressing you a few lines. More than a year ago, the Rev. Mr. Haynes, of Rutland, Vermont, presented me with a volume of your sermons on the Doctrines of the Gospel. With these sermons I was highly gratified. They exhibit the doctrines of our blessed religion in that view which I think correspondent with the teachings of the Holy Spirit. Within a short time I have been so highly favoured as to procure the four volumes of your work. It will be saying but a part of what I feel, to say that I esteem them a very precious treasure. I am now reading the first volume with great delight, and, I trust, spiritual improvement. I am highly delighted with the view which you give of appropriating faith. Owing to my situation and connexions, and the workings of a legal spirit, I was for some time much in the dark respecting this vastly important subject; but I could not find peace and satisfaction until I had been taught, as I hope, to come to Christ as lost and undone, helpless

and vile, and receive him as *my* Saviour, a Saviour provided and given to me in the Gospel. I now find it much more easy and delightful preaching the Gospel, to address my fellow-sinners as dead in sin and under the curse, and calling upon them to look to Christ—to come to him, guilty and wretched as they are, and receive him as God's unspeakable gift *to them;* and I have reason to believe that more of the Divine blessing attends my poor labours in the vineyard." To this may be added a letter from the late Rev. John Brown, of Whitburn, Scotland, eldest son of the eminent Mr. Brown of Haddington; it is dated

"Edinburgh, January 1st, 1818.

"Rev. and dear Brother,

"Your kind and unexpected gift of your sermons was received last year. The warm and lively way in which you express Divine truth pleases me much, but especially the able exhibition of Gospel grace; they are such sermons as are peculiarly savory to me, and to my brother Ebenezer,* and to my sons in the ministry, and to all who have seen them and have the true relish. I have long been an admirer of what we in Scotland call Marrow doctrine, as you well know in allusion to the Marrow of Modern Divinity; and your sermons, being fully on

* The late Rev. Ebenezer Brown, of Inverkeithing.

this plan, are most delightful to us. My worthy friend, the Rev. Mr. Forrest (of Stamford, Delaware county), made me acquainted with your character, and sent me some single sermons. I had brought the sermon on 'The Female Labourer' to be printed in Edinburgh, but it was unhappily lost: there are many eminently useful ladies in Edinburgh and Leith, and I hope we will get this done again.* Last week a worthy friend, a bookseller, Mr. John Thompson, wrote me that he had got one of your volumes, and that he had a wish to publish the four volumes in two; he belongs to a company who are ready to introduce every evangelical book into a large circulation both here and in London. Under the favour of Providence, another, a third edition of Hervey's Life, will soon be put to press; I shall send you a copy when published. All grace attend you and family, and all success in your labours in the pulpit and the press. Most cordially yours,

"J. Brown."

To this letter Dr. Proudfit sent the following reply, dated

"Salem, 26th March, 1818.

"My very dear Brother,

"I was refreshed last week by the receipt of

* A few months after the date of this letter, this sermon was republished in Edinburgh, for the benefit of the Leith Female Society for the Relief of Aged and Indigent Women.

your letter, dated 1st January, 1818, and feel constrained to apologize for neglecting to answer your communication of 1817, sent with a valuable collection of tracts. The same present would have been thankfully received from any person, but its value was much enhanced as coming from the hands of a descendant of one whose memory is dear to me, and whose memory will be embalmed by his writings from generation to generation. The works of your venerable father are common with us in this region, and are highly esteemed by those who relish the truth as it is in Jesus. I consider it my own honour and happiness to be descended from one who may justly be ranked among the fathers of the American churches. He left his kindred and native country in the meridian of life, to preach in this Western world the Gospel of the grace of God. The act of the Presbytery appointing him to the American churches is now before me, dated Muckart, July 2d, 1754. The ministers present were, Rev. William Moncrief, Alexander Moncrief, after whom I have the honour of being named, Thomas Mair, George Brown, William Mair, John Muckersie, and A. Blythe. Mr. Brown delivered the ordination sermon from Gal., ii., 15, 16. I have been thus minute, supposing it would be some gratification to you to hear of a transaction which took

place in your own country nearly seventy years ago. After a life of laborious and disinterested services during almost fifty years, he fell asleep in Jesus, October 22d, 1802. I have no doubt his prayers have descended in showers of blessings, both temporal and spiritual, upon me and mine. 'But our fathers, where are they?' Yet how consoling is the reflection, that although they die, Jesus Jehovah still lives—lives as the Head over all things to his Church—lives as the light and life, the joy, and portion, and glory of all who confide in his fulness and faithfulness.

"I was particularly refreshed in hearing that my sermons have proved so very acceptable to yourself and other friends of religion in that quarter of the world. I cannot express my obligations of gratitude to that infinitely condescending Jesus who aided me in preparing them for the press, and who has rendered them an acceptable offering to his dear people. It is *all of grace*—of free, sovereign, exceedingly abounding grace, that to me, who am less than the least of all saints, is given the honour of publishing from the pulpit or the press the unsearchable riches of Christ. It was very gratifying to learn from your letter the design of reprinting the four volumes in Scotland. I received a communication from Mr. Thompson on that subject, and have complied with his request in forwarding

some discourses not included in the former edition. The volumes have had an extensive circulation in this country, and it would be particularly gratifying to have them now circulated in the land of my fathers; a land distinguished above all others for the long reign of that kingdom which is righteousness and peace, and from which, as from a centre, the Gospel is now shedding its radiance upon different and distant nations. I have often intended crossing the ocean, on purpose to become acquainted with my dear fellow-labourers in Scotland, England, and Ireland, but various avocations have hitherto hindered the execution of this design. The present world I wish to consider as the place of exertion, and not of ease or enjoyment; and if we only occupy with fidelity our talents in the respective sections of the Church to which our Master has assigned us, we shall soon meet in the world where there is neither separation, nor sin, nor sorrow; meet with the redeemed, not of a single country or age, but of all countries and all ages. There our fellowship will be infinitely more pure, and our pleasures more elevated than in the present imperfect state. Remember me to the dear fellow-labourers in that part of the vineyard whom I have never seen, and probably never will see in the flesh. Although absent in body, let us hereafter, as present in spirit,

remember each other at the throne of our common Father. That mercy, grace, and peace from the fountain of blessing may be multiplied upon you and yours, is the prayer of your brother in the faith of Jesus, and co-worker in the service of his Gospel,

"A. PROUDFIT."

"Rev. John Brown, Whitburn, Scotland."

The feelings awakened in Dr. Proudfit's mind by these various testimonials to the usefulness of his writings are thus expressed in his diary, under date of

"*March*, 19*th*, 1818. This morning set apart one hour for thanksgiving, prayer, and praise:

"1st. For all those blessings, both common and special, which crown my condition in the various relations of life. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. With thee, Eternal God, is the fountain of life, light, joy, of every blessing, temporal or spiritual, in time and in eternity.

"2d. Especially I desire to bless the Lord this morning for that degree of approbation with which my sermons have been received by the friends of truth in our own country, and also in foreign countries, as expressed by letters recently received from various parts of New-England, and yesterday from Edinburgh, Scotland.

"Oh, what a monument of Divine goodness,

and forbearance, and condescension I am! and what a display of sovereign grace it is, that the treasure should at all be communicated to earthen vessels, and particularly that it should be imparted to me, who am truly more insignificant and undeserving than any other! I might have been a vessel of wrath in both worlds, despised in this, and lost in the next; but instead of this, I am, I trust, a chosen vessel to bear the Saviour's name to perishing sinners! What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? I would this morning make a new surrender of my all to the Redeemer and his service. I desire from this time to love him supremely, walk with him more intimately, and live for him more exclusively. Now, thou precious Lord Jesus, who hast shown infinite condescension in calling me to the ministry, and supporting me so far in the important trust, accept of me as thine own, qualify me more abundantly with the gifts of wisdom and zeal for thy holy service, give efficacy to my imperfect writings wherever they have been circulated or may be circulated, and make them subservient for advancing the honour of thy name and the edification of thy Church."

The extracts from the diary already given show what was Dr. Proudfit's manner of life at home; we shall now give some passages illustrative of the frame of mind which he aimed to

maintain when called to go abroad. In the bosom of his own family, the retirement of his study, and on his frequent journeyings, he endeavoured to walk with God. Wherever he was, he kept up the habit of prayer and meditation; no one could be in his company, in any place, at home or abroad, without soon learning that he was a minister of the Lord Jesus.

"*Albany, April 4th*, 1818. Am unexpectedly called to spend the Sabbath in this city, and assist Mr. S——, who is indisposed, in dispensing the memorial of the dying love of Jesus; have found consolation from that gracious assurance of my Master, 'Lo! I am with you even unto the end of the world.' Oh my soul, how animating is the consideration that I serve an ever-present, ever-living, and ever-loving Master; one whose eyes are always upon the righteous; one who, at home or abroad, in the week or on the Sabbath, will be found of them that seek him! I desire, therefore, to set apart one hour for devout meditation and prayer, for solemnly returning to him as my portion and glory. I often experience that, by much conversation with men, more especially with the men of the world, my heart becomes insensibly estranged from the living God. I find it more profitable to be frequently alone, retired both from the persons and pursuits of this world, and

to commune more intimately with the Father of Spirits, from whom I derived my all, and to whom I owe my all; whose favour is life, and the assurance of whose love is more refreshing, a thousand fold, than all created enjoyments. Return to him as thy rest this morning, my soul, and aim at conversing more frequently and familiarly with him. The Lord is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. To his fatherly protection I now commit my dear family, who are scattered, some of them upon the land, and others on the waters. Although remote from me, they are nigh to him who is the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of those who are afar off upon the sea. There is not a part of his dominions where his eye is not present, seeing all who rest on his love; he can accomplish his will without my weak instrumentality, and in this consideration my heart rejoices.

"*September 5th*, 1818. *Sharon, Connecticut.* Reached this place last evening, and lodged in the family of Mr. S——; there met with Mr. L——, a dear friend in Christ Jesus; found all the connexions singularly hospitable and kind, and enjoyed much pleasant conversation. Having parted with them in the morning, began to reflect that perhaps we might never meet again on earth, and felt pungent sorrow that our con-

versation had not been more practical and experimental. Oh, how much precious time is lost in our occasional interviews by the indulgence of discourse which is not profitable for the use of edifying! How much might be done for provoking one another to love and good works, for cherishing the gifts and graces of each other, was our conversation more uniformly seasoned with salt! How instrumental might we thus become in stimulating each other when slothful, in animating each other when desponding, in strengthening each other when weak, and in rousing each other to greater vigilance when ready to slumber and sleep. Then our intercourse on earth would be a lively semblance, a delightful foretaste of that intimate and uninterrupted fellowship which may be expected in our Father's kingdom.

"*Cornwall, Connecticut, September 6th*, 1818. *Sabbath afternoon.* Met last evening and this morning with the young heathen who are collected here from various parts of the world to receive a religious education, and found much comfort and enlargement in addressing them. In looking at them and conversing with them, felt an unutterable longing over them in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, and a solicitude to become instrumental in their conversion. Saw three of them publicly renounce the

idolatry of their native countries, and assisted in initiating them into the Christian Church by the ordinance of baptism; afterward sat down and participated with them in receiving the symbols of that crucified Jesus whom all nations shall call blessed; felt much impressed at the scene, and viewed it as a partial accomplishment of the promise that 'Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God,' and the sons of Messiah, by adopting grace, shall come from far. Oh! had I the wings of an angel, and his eloquence, how rapturously would I fly from region to region, and proclaim to benighted man the unsearchable riches of Christ; announcing those tidings of great joy which are designed for all people, that unto them a Saviour is born, even Christ the Lord!

"*Goshen, Connecticut, September 13th*, 1818. *Sabbath evening.* Preached through the day in the church usually occupied by the Rev. Mr. H——y, and in the evening held a meeting for social prayer and conference; found a number of the assembly, both male and female, much exercised to godliness, and enjoyed much comfort in their society. In the evening met with a short narrative of the life of the Rev. Mr. H——, who had preceded Mr. H——y as pastor of that church, and felt both edified and animated in reading the account of his abundant labours and

triumphant death. From the increase of bodily infirmities, especially by the increasing weakness in my breast, feel admonished of my approaching dissolution, and that my great business is now to prepare for death; was deeply impressed with the necessity of setting my heart and house in order, and standing in constant readiness for my departure from this world and all its concerns. In taking farewell of the precious followers of Jesus in Goshen, was constrained to adore my Master that he is affording me these opportunities of enlarging my acquaintance with the spiritual family, and meeting with those on earth with whom I wish to spend an eternity in heaven."

In the private record of this part of Dr. Proudfit's life there are repeated references to a very heavy affliction. No intimation is given as to its nature; but it was the occasion of his setting apart many seasons for humiliation before God, and prayer for deliverance. His feelings under the dispensation are thus expressed under date of

"*June* 30*th*, 1820. I desire to acknowledge before God, and to confess that sin which is the procuring cause of all my troubles; particularly, 1. I desire to confess my pride, my self-confidence, my self-sufficiency, my earthly-mindedness, my dependance on the creature more than the Creator. The Lord is just in all the judgments

which he is inflicting on me ; yea, he is punishing me infinitely less than my iniquities deserve. Oh, thou Holy One of Israel, my soul this morning bows before thee with humiliating thoughts of its own vileness on account of sin ! 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, I could not stand.' 'O Lord, to me belongeth confusion of face,' because I have sinned against thee.

"2. I desire to commit the matter, with all its circumstances, to the management of my God and Father in the Lord Jesus Christ. He knows what is most for his own glory—what issue in this visitation will be most conducive to the edification of his Church, and to my own spiritual interests and rejoicing through eternity, therefore I desire implicitly to commit it to his most holy, wise and merciful management. Ps., lvii., 2 ; l., 15. I am ignorant of my own true interests, and therefore, in submission to a sovereign God, I would say, 'Not my will, but thine be done.'

"3. That the Lord would lead me to a suitable frame under this dispensation, and that it may be rendered subservient to my humility, my self-denial, and future usefulness in his Church."

The issue of this trial is thus described in a subsequent part of the diary. "This dispensation, which like a cloud had been hanging over us for some months, portentous and awful,

threatening to burst forth to our destruction, was suddenly, and in a manner almost miraculous, dissipated, to the astonishment of all, tending much to the confirmation of the faith of God's children. It is the Lord's doing, and is wondrous in our eyes. Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive. They that know thy name will put their trust in thee. This season of affliction was speedily followed by a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; the word preached was accompanied with unusual power in the conversion of sinners, especially of youth; and at our sacrament in March, among others, six young men united with the Church who afterward entered the ministry. This fact I wrote down for my own encouragement in future trials. 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.'"

Amid his personal trials, as might be inferred from the views thus expressed, he was not unmindful of the interests of religion. The diary of these years contains repeated records of agreement with members of his own congregation, and with brethren of other denominations, to set apart special seasons of prayer for the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Neither was he unmindful of those individual members of his flock who stood in need of his pastoral counsels and prayers, as the following passage from the diary will show:

"*April 20th.* Set apart one hour this morning in special prayer for a young man in whom I feel particularly interested, and who is in danger of being seduced from the paths of virtue.

"1. As he is the son of pious parents, I would plead the gracious promises, Deut., xxx., 6. Isa., xliv., 3; lix., 21.

"2. I would desire to look to the Lord by earnest prayer, that he would direct me how to deal with him, by cautions and exhortations.

"3. That he would display his infinite power and condescension in giving efficacy to any means which I employ for reclaiming him. Nothing is too hard for Omnipotence to effect, and nothing is too great for unbounded goodness to communicate. He who reclaimed a Manasseh, a Saul, a thief on the cross, a Gardiner, and a Newton, can with infinite ease reclaim him.

"*April 22d,* 1820. Set apart one hour to present before the Lord, by supplication, the objects mentioned in the morning of Saturday; and also that the God of all comfort would give light and joy to a female member of the congregation who has been long in spiritual darkness."

The young man referred to in the first of these extracts was afterward reclaimed, and became a hopeful monument of the grace of God.

A zeal for the propagation of the Gospel at home and abroad, like that of Dr. Proudfit,

could not exist without a corresponding zeal for the increase of faithful and devoted labourers in the Gospel. This was manifested by him, in a greater or less degree, during the whole of his ministry, and in various ways; few pastors have had the happiness to see so many of the youth of their churches devoting themselves to the work of the ministry, and few have aided so large a number to obtain an education with a view to that office. During his ministry, the church of Salem sent forth from her youthful membership between thirty and forty preachers of the Gospel, the greater part of whom were baptized by Dr. Proudfit.

It was, perhaps, owing to this circumstance that, about the year 1819, the plan was formed of establishing a Theological Seminary at Salem, in connexion with the Washington County Academy, and to be under the care of Dr. Proudfit. From the diary of that period, it would appear that the promise of considerable funds had been obtained, and all the preliminary arrangements made. Thus, under date of

"*July* 13*th*, 1819. This morning set apart one hour to lay before the Lord the plan of the Theological Seminary which is now resolved upon in this place. As this institution is designed to furnish labourers for the spiritual harvest, and more particularly for the frontier settlements, I desire to take encouragement. Again,

"*July* 18*th*, 1819. Agreed to set apart one hour with some Christian friends this evening, to lay before the Great Head of the Church the Theological Seminary which is to be established in this place."

This project, however, was never carried into effect, in consequence of the election of Dr. Proudfit by the General Synod, in 1820, as an associate of Dr. Mason in the conduct of the Seminary at New-York. Had this arrangement been made at the commencement of that institution—as some of the leading and most judicious members of the Church in New-York wished—the result would, humanly speaking, have been most happy. But, unfortunately, Dr. Mason had a different scheme of his own, which, though never realized, effectually interfered with the proposed removal of Dr. Proudfit to New-York. Had these two early friends been associated in the conduct of the Seminary from its beginning, there are strong reasons for believing that the whole complexion of its history would have been changed.

Splendid as were the talents and attainments of Dr. Mason, and admirably fitted as he was, on many accounts, for the work of theological instruction, there were some qualifications which he did not possess; and, among all the ministers of the Church at the time of the organization of

the Seminary, none was better entitled to be associated with him than Dr. Proudfit. He had enjoyed the best educational advantages which the country then afforded. During his early years he was a close student, and in all that belonged to the important branch of pastoral theology he was admirably fitted to give instruction to candidates for the ministry. This was the very department in which the New-York Seminary was always and greatly deficient. In saying this, we of course do not mean in the least to detract from the high reputation of Dr. Mason as a theological instructor; on the contrary, we believe that the system of study formed by him, and carried out in the old Seminary at New-York, so far as circumstances would permit, is decidedly superior to that of any other similar institution in our country. As a teacher in the two important departments of Biblical exposition and systematic divinity, Dr. Mason was unsurpassed, if he was not unrivalled; but no man can excel in everything. And we are therefore thoroughly convinced that, if these brethren had been associated, while yet "the dew of their youth" was upon them, in the work of theological instruction, the character of both would have been rendered, by their mutual influence, more complete, the Seminary would have been placed upon a permanent basis, and the interests

of the Church at large would have been greatly promoted.

But in the wise and holy ordering of Divine Providence, it was not so to be. The result was not, indeed, an absolute suspension of that affectionate friendship which breathes in the early letters of Dr. Mason, but there was not the cordiality which had formerly existed.* Dr. Proudfit exerted himself to procure funds for the Seminary; but for a number of years it does not appear to have had his full confidence, and he certainly did not manifest that active interest in it which might have been expected from him, considering the warmth of his zeal for all institutions whose object was the spread of the Gospel. His reasons for this course had been removed before his election in 1819; but by this time the Seminary itself was in a dying condition; and while Dr. Proudfit evidently believed himself to be called, in the providence of God, to enter upon the duties of the professorship, the propriety of his acceptance of the appointment was doubted by some of his old and warmest friends. Although chosen to be *asso-*

* We mention this circumstance, because we think it is the office of biography to paint human life, not as it should be, but as it is; to give its shades as well as lights. In the present world, imperfection attaches even to sanctified friendship; and the instances are comparatively few in which the attachments of youth continue unabated even to old age.

ciate professor with Dr. Mason, he had every reason to expect, from the state of Dr. Mason's health, that the whole burden of carrying on the work of instruction would devolve upon himself. The election took place in June, the session commenced in November, so that he had but little time to prepare for the arduous task; then he was away from the cheering influences of his family and congregation, and the very abundance of his past labours, his active interest in every benevolent institution, could hardly have failed to exert such an influence upon his habits of study as to unfit him, at his time of life, for such a theological chair as that which he had been called to fill. The result showed that it was in quite a different department, though an equally honourable one, that his Divine Master intended to employ him. His connexion with the Seminary continued but for one session, during which time he was sorely tried by bodily sickness, and by unkind treatment from some whom he had greatly aided in their preparation for the ministry, and from others of whom better things might have been expected. He refers to these things in his diary:

"*Salem, May 9th*, 1821. The Lord has been trying me, for months past, with a variety of humiliating providences; with affliction in body; reproach from some of my brethren, who have

attempted to lessen my influence in the Church; with gross ingratitude from some students whom I have assisted both by advice and property; and with embarrassment in my pecuniary affairs; and therefore I set apart one hour this morning for special prayer and meditation; and,

"1st. I desire to consider all these trials as coming from God, whatever may be the instrumentality of man in bringing them on, and I would therefore, by humiliation and repentance, 'turn to the hand that smiteth.'

"2d. I acknowledge that the Lord is just in sending them, and that they are infinitely less than I deserve. I believe that he is not only *just*, but *gracious*, in visiting me with these trials. Many smiles of his providence I have enjoyed, and I believe that these afflictions are sent to wean me from the world, and I trust they have been sanctified for that purpose. The things of time never appeared so insipid, yea, so loathsome and abominable, as under this series of afflictions. I desire to commit them all to my God in covenant, to be overruled for his glory and my greater usefulness in his Church. Oh, how great is his condescension in the invitation, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord!' What a worm of the dust—what a vile, ungrateful, hell-deserving sinner I have been! and yet the 'High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity' is saying to me,

'Cast thy burden on me; I will sustain thee.' I read over the account of a few loaves and fishes feeding such a multitude, related in Matt., xiv., 16–21, and then inferred with what ease he can supply all my wants. Also read Matt., chapters viii. and xiv., the difficulties in which the disciples were involved, how seasonably the compassionate Saviour interposed, disappointing their fears, and rendering the dispensation subservient to the confirmation of their faith.

"*May* 10*th.* Spent one hour in laying before the Lord the same subjects as yesterday morning."

While the sources of his trials are thus briefly mentioned, there is no evidence of the existence of unkind feelings, on his part, towards the authors of them; on the contrary, he seems to have laboured, at least, to enter into the spirit of the words, "they are the sword, the hand is thine."

It may be added that Dr. Proudfit himself appears to have been brought to the conclusion before stated, that his destined field of labour was to be, as it had been for so many years, in the sphere of active exertion rather than the more retired sphere of theological instruction; and, accordingly, the scheme of erecting a Seminary at Salem, which had been so far matured as to be on the eve of being carried into effect, was abandoned; there is, at least, no more ref-

erence to it in the diary. The ensuing summer of 1821 was one of very severe affliction; his health was greatly shattered, and serious apprehensions were felt that his day of labour was drawing to a close. His recovery was slow; for many months he was unable for the discharge of any of his pastoral duties; but there can be no doubt that there was mercy in the dispensation. The Lord had much for him still to do; in fact, some of the most important labours of his life were yet before him; and we have reason to believe that this long season of bodily and mental suffering was appointed by his Divine Master as a means of preparing him for the work in which he was to be engaged during the latter years of his life.

Occupied as Dr. Proudfit was with the cares of the Seminary during his residence in New-York, he was not unmindful of the claims of his people and of his family. Among the several pastoral letters which he addressed to the former, and which were all read from the pulpit, the following well deserve a place in this record of his life, the one to the youth, and the other to the congregation at large.

"New-York, November 22d, 1820.

"To the youth of that congregation over which the Holy Ghost hath made me overseer, mercy and peace be multiplied.

"My dear young friends, I have this day finished and forwarded a letter to the congregation at large, but he who hath given me the charge of souls, and to whom the account of my stewardship must shortly be rendered, hath particularly enjoined, *feed my lambs; forget not the rising generation;* and although I acknowledge that I have not studied, nor prayed, nor preached, nor watched, nor fasted, nor visited from house to house, nor catechised from district to district, or through the town, as I might or ought to have done, for precious immortals committed to me, an insignificant under-shepherd, by the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, yet your own consciences will readily bear testimony that your eternal interests have not altogether been neglected on my part. Should one or two, or ten of you perish in your impenitence, you cannot, in that hour when God will judge you *individually*, nor in that day when he shall judge the *world*, charge your damnation either to my indolence or unfaithfulness. Those addresses and sermons which have been published new-year after new-year, and directed immediately to the young, are a memorial before the throne of God and before the world, and in your own consciences, that I am pure from your blood; that you have not gone down to hell without warning of your danger and duty; of your disease

as sinners, and of the sovereign, infallible virtue of that balm which grows upon the Hill of Calvary. Among your earliest recollections, you must remember that the truth has been sounding in your ears, sometimes in your father's house, and sometimes in the house of God, that, you are the children of wrath by *nature;* that except you be born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God; that there is a free and full salvation in Jesus Christ; and that there is neither pardon nor peace for a son or daughter of Adam in any other.

"As I have been confined to my room this day by a slight bodily indisposition, I have thought much about you; I have passed in imagination from family to family, noticing such a precious youth in whose eyes I have occasionally seen a penitential tear rising under the word of exhortation, and I have also observed, with heaviness of heart, such a youth on whom the voice either of terror or entreaty made no impression.

"I have this day prayed frequently, and sometimes with a degree of enlargement, that the eyes of your understanding might be opened to discover your danger before it is too late; that you might be driven by a holy necessity to escape the damnation of hell before you are wrapped irrecoverably in its flames. I have been looking upon you, my dear youth, with a measure

of the same solicitude with which the compassionate Saviour looked on the inhabitants of Jerusalem when he wept and exclaimed, 'If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belonged to thy peace.'

"Having in my private room felt alternately these hopes and fears respecting your immortal destinies, I sit down to indulge my feelings by sending you this address. I ought to acknowledge that my heart has been encouraged not a little in the labours of the Gospel by your attention to the outward means; you have committed to memory catechisms, psalms, hymns, and chapters of the Bible; but in my Master's name, I ask you, as it were, *one* by *one*, the following questions: 'Hast thou actually closed with the Lord Jesus Christ as thine own Saviour in particular? Hast thou sought and obtained peace to thy conscience by applying his sacrifice and righteousness? Art thou depending upon him from day to day as thy friend and portion, and the guide of thy youth?' A general attention to the means of salvation, or a general persuasion of the truths of the Gospel, never yet brought a sinner to heaven; it will never bring thee to heaven any more than looking at bread on the table will satisfy thy hunger, or at water in the fountain will quench thy thirst, or looking at medicine in the hands of the phy-

sician will heal a disease upon thy body. It was the maxim of the Reformers, it is the maxim of every apostle and prophet of the Lamb, that an unapplied Saviour is no Saviour. His righteousness only adorns those who put it on; his blood only reconciles those who apply it by a living faith; his grace sanctifies only those who are united to his person; his promises are the charter of eternal life only of those who receive them; and, in the end, his salvation will be awarded as the portion only of those who are one with him, as the members are one with the head, or as the branches are one with the vine.

"Perhaps some of you are impressed with these infinitely important realities, but are secretly saying, 'I know not how I may attain to an interest in the Saviour, and thus make my calling and election sure.' Oh that I might indulge the hope, my beloved youth, that you are thus awake to a reflection upon your everlasting concerns. A deep discovery of your disease I would consider as the commencement of your cure—as the pangs of the second birth—as the struggling to enter the strait gate, which would infallibly issue in your admission. To any of you who are eagerly asking 'What shall I do to be saved?' I would most affectionately give the following directions: Meditate much on the love

of Christ; try to believe on the testimony of his own Word, that he waits to be gracious; that he has no pleasure in the sinner's death, but would that they turn from their wicked ways and live. Meditate much on his design in coming into the world and dying on the cross: it was to save sinners: had we not been sinners, Jesus had not come in the character of a Saviour; and had he not delighted in the salvation of sinners, he would not have bled for their ransom. He suffered for us, the just for the unjust, for this very purpose, that he might bring us to God. Meditate on the success of all who have applied to him for mercy. See the instance of the woman who had the issue of blood twelve years, and of the ruler of the synagogue, as related in the 5th chapter of Mark. See the instance of him who had waited at the pool thirty-eight years, and of the woman of Canaan, recorded in Matthew, xv., and in the 5th chapter of John. Meditate also on the following invitations of the divinely compassionate Saviour: Proverbs, viii., 32. Jeremiah, iii., 4. Matthew, xi., 28–30. Luke, xi., 13. Read in your Bibles all these instances in which he showed mercy to others, and believe that he is as merciful *now* as when he sojourned in our world; that he is as willing to glorify his grace in your salvation as in theirs. Would he permit his bless-

ed side to be opened, that he might open a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, and afterward reject you, when applying to his blood for pardon and purification? Does he not most solemnly assure you, 'him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;' and, my young friends, having gained an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have nothing more to gain; all things are yours—earth and heaven are yours—grace and glory are yours. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but if, through your unbelief and impenitence, you fail of an interest in him, all the curses written in the Bible are your fearful inheritance; you will live under the curse, you will die under the curse; your souls will go to the judgment-seat, and then to hell under the curse; your bodies will sink into the grave under the curse; they will moulder in the grave, and rise from it under the curse; and your souls and bodies, reunited at the resurrection, must continue to drink the cup of cursing while there is an avenging God to fill it up. I warn each of you committed to my charge—I warn you in the presence of God, and of Jesus, and of angels, that if you neglect this great salvation, you cannot escape; after trampling on such love and long-suffering manifested by the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, you *ought* not to escape. After you have heard this warning

from your absent pastor read in the church, retire to your houses with resolutions to unite that very afternoon with the Saviour of sinners as your own Saviour in particular. Let the evening be spent in the exercises of self-examination and self-dedication; be entreated and urged by all the riches of Jehovah's mercy not to lie down upon your beds until you have made your peace with him, by an affectionate and particular appropriation of his dear Son as your righteousness and portion. That God who gave you being, and sustains you in life every moment, commands each of you as with a voice from the third heavens, '*to-day* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth;' and if, in the face of all those admonitions, one of you will dare to postpone your repentance until to-morrow, he may swear in his wrath that you shall not enter into his rest. The bed in your father's house on which you indolently recline this evening may be exchanged for the flames of hell before the light of the morning returns. Wilt thou not, therefore, from the time that this warning is heard from the pulpit, be constantly crying unto him, 'my Father, thou art the guide of my youth.' Wilt thou not look by fervent prayer for the accomplishment of his promises, '*a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will*

I put within you; I will pour upon you the spirit of grace and supplication, and ye shall look upon me whom ye have pierced. As the sheet of paper is nearly filled up, and my strength almost exhausted, I must conclude, committing you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to sanctify and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with everlasting joy. Cease not to pray for yourselves, and for your absent yet truly affectionate pastor in the Lord Jesus Christ, ALEXANDER PROUDFIT."

"New-York, November 22d, 1820.

"To that flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made me overseer, grace and peace be multiplied from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Brethren dearly beloved, this is the first Sabbath which has occurred since my departure from you, and I may freely assert that you are frequently in my thoughts both by night and by day. When the bell gave the signal this morning of the approach of the hour of public worship, my imagination bore me to our own peaceful sanctuary. I was led to recollect those frequent occasions when we had mingled sweet fellowship in the exercises of prayer and praise, of preaching and hearing the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation, and in surrounding

the table of our common Saviour to receive the symbols of his own body and blood. While sitting in the temple to-day in this city, my soul was occasionally ascending in ardent supplications, that the Holy Ghost might descend on you and your dear offspring in his sanctifying and saving influences. I have no doubt that there are many of you to whom the Sabbath of Jehovah is a delight, and his tabernacle precious. You can probably appeal to him from repeated experience, 'blessed are they who dwell in thy house;' 'a day in thy courts is better than a thousand;' 'one thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord forever, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.' There your burdens have been removed, your doubts have vanished before the light of your Father's countenance, the shadows of night have been dispersed by the beams of the rising sun, your grievances have been redressed, your tears have been dried up, your holy resolutions confirmed, your desires after the things of this passing world have been in some degree mortified, your longings for the full fruition of the heavenly state have been strengthened, and from the duties of the temple you have frequently retired with new degrees of enlargement to the devotions of the family and the

closet. This, with respect to many of you, has been, I trust, the repeated and blessed experience. See, my Christian friends, that for past enjoyments of this nature you give to God the undivided praise, and ask more liberally from his fullness in the time to come. 'He hath been mindful of you, and he will bless you still;' be uniform and unwearied in your attendance upon the ordinances of his house; be frequent and fervent in supplicating his blessing upon all these ordinances. How much more might we enjoy of God, of the light of his countenance, of the pledges of his love, of a foretaste of those endless pleasures which are at his right hand, were we more importunate as we go to his sanctuary, expostulating in the language of David, 'oh send out thy light and thy truth;' or with Moses, 'Lord, show me thy glory; if thy presence go not up with me, carry me not up hence.' We receive not, because we ask not; we receive little of the consolations of the covenant, because we ask little. No parent can possibly be so willing to impart to the wants of the most beloved child, as our Father in heaven is ready and cheerful at all times to supply the necessities of his spiritual children. He waits to be gracious; he is ever ready, by night or by day, in his own house or in your houses, 'to do *in* you and *for* you exceeding abundantly, beyond what you can ask

or think.' Ask, therefore, frequently and freely, and it shall be given you; 'ask and receive, that your joy may be full.'

"But, alas! what sorrow overwhelms my soul when I express my fears—may I not add, when I express even my convictions—that there are some of you who yet remain strangers to these exercises. Do you not lie down in the evening without offering a tribute of gratitude to that God who supported you during the employments and dangers of the day; whose care protected you amid the perils with which you were surrounded, and whose bounty supplied your various wants? Do you not rise in the morning without lifting up your souls in thanksgiving to Him who preserved you through the night—who in his tender mercies permitted no evil to befall you, nor any plague to come nigh your dwelling? Do you not repair to the church on the morning of the sacred Sabbath without reflecting on the purity and majesty of that God whose presence you approach, or without asking his blessing on yourselves, or your families or others? And after the public services are finished, do you not return home as thoughtless of God and of your eternal destinies, as unconcerned about the necessity of pardon through the Saviour's sacrifice, of being born of the Spirit, of setting your affections upon things above, as if no warning

had been given? Ye who are thus at ease in Zion, I have so often admonished you of your danger from the pulpit, that I am utterly at a loss what other arguments to adduce as a means of rousing you to a consideration of your ways. I have so frequently appealed to your fears by exhibiting the miseries of hell, and to your hopes by presenting the happiness of heaven, that I know not by what other motives to aim at alarming, or impressing, or persuading you. But perhaps the very consideration that, although absent from you in body, I am yet present with you in mind, longing over you in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, travailing, as it were, in birth for your salvation, perhaps this consideration, through the Holy Ghost working mightily upon your hearts, may prove the happy occasion of leading you to reflect on your everlasting concerns. Who knows but the spirit of life and of power may constrain the aged and the young who have long remained thoughtless to reason in the following manner: Surely if one who is related merely as a pastor is thus anxious about my future interest, is it not unreasonable that I should feel unconcerned? My dear fellow-sinners and fellow-immortals, after this letter has been read in the public congregation and you have returned to your respective residences, retire to your closets and solemnize

your hearts in the presence of the Father of Spirits; devote a little time to self-examination; inquire whether you have undergone that change of heart without which neither you, nor a son, nor a daughter of Adam shall see the Lord in peace. Weep, weep bitterly over the indolence and impenitence of your past lives. It is no matter what you have done in your secular pursuits, if you have forgotten God your Creator, and Jesus your Redeemer; if you have not given him the supreme love of your hearts, and the obedience of your lives, you have lived in vain, you have been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. Whatever may have been the vanity of former months or years, resolve, from the hour that this admonition is received, that you will live for the Lord, and for your souls, and for eternity. Oh! beloved brethren, I cannot cease to expostulate with you on these infinitely important matters while the exercise of reason is left to me, or you remain prisoners of hope. Can I bear the thought that one of you, male or female, old or young, rich or poor, black or white, which was committed to me in trust by the Great Shepherd, should at last be doomed to devouring flames? Shall all my entreaties with you in private and public—shall all my studies, my prayers, my anxieties, my watchings, my fastings for your salvation, during the lapse

of twenty-six years, prove only the occasion of aggravating your guilt in that hour when I must render an account of my stewardship before men, and angels, and God? Shall that Gospel which I have so often proclaimed to you in weakness, yet in purity and simplicity, which has become to millions the savour of life unto life, prove unto one of you the savour of death unto death? But I hope better things of you—even things which accompany salvation. Willingly I cherish the pleasing persuasion that some aged sinner, who has long been led captive by his own lusts, or some precious youth, will from this evening break their covenant with death and their agreement with hell, by repenting and turning to the Lord.

"'Finally, brethren, farewell; be perfect, be of good comfort, live in peace, and the God of love and of peace shall be with you.' Receive this epistle as an assurance that, although separated from you in the providence of God, I am present with you in spirit; receive it as an expression of my solicitude for your welfare, and my willingness, either by the mouth or the pen, to promote it as opportunity offers. Should I be spared of the Lord to return to you at the appointed time, it is not to be expected that I will find in the land of the living all whom I addressed at my departure. But into what fam-

ily of my beloved flock the messenger of death will make his entrance—what father, or mother, or son, or daughter will be first added to his trophies, is unknown to me; this is locked up among the impenetrable secrets of a sovereign God. 'Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.' That grace may be with you all is and shall be the prayer of your servant, for Jesus' sake, ALEXANDER PROUDFIT."

Among the numerous letters to the members of his family, written during Dr. P.'s residence in New-York, we select the following to his eldest son, then a student at Union College, now the Rev. Dr. John Proudfit, of Rutgers College. It is dated

"New-York, March 4th, 1821.

"MY VERY DEAR SON,

"Mr. M. reached this city last evening, by whom I received your letter, and desire devoutly to thank that God who has so far preserved you and the other branches of our beloved family during our long separation. Let us unite in adoring him for our protection in times past, and rely upon him, that in his abundant goodness he would afford us an opportunity of meeting each other in the land of the living. I notice from your letter that you feel solicitous about the pros-

pect before you, when, if spared in life, you must enter the public theatre and act your part in the world. It is very proper that you should feel thus anxious, because in the choice of a profession, and the manner in which you discharge the duties of that profession, your temporal comfort and your eternal welfare are very intimately involved. I know well how to sympathize with you. I experienced the same solicitude in my own turn before you. The same hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, which alternately agitate your bosom, agitated my own; but, my dear son, how precious is the promise, 'I will be your God and the God of your seed;' and he who has supported me to the period of nearly fifty years, amid ten thousand weaknesses; who has kept me, in some measure, from the pollutions of the world; who has followed me, worthless and insignificant as I am, with so many expressions of loving-kindness and tender mercy, is just as ready to bless you. He is the same loving, forbearing, sympathizing God, 'yesterday, to-day, and forever;' always infinitely able and willing to guide, and guard, and prosper, and comfort those who put their trust in him. The promise stands more immoveable than the everlasting hills, 'I will not turn away from you to do you good.' There is one passage which often gave me consolation within the walls of Columbia College when sep-

arated far from earthly friends, and which I think was literally fulfilled, Gen., xxviii., 20–22. That and the following promises I would affectionately recommend to your meditation: Isa., xli., 10; xlii., 16; xliii., 2. Jer., xxxii., 39–41; iii., 4. My dear son, consider these promises as certain, being the sayings of him who cannot lie; they are yea and amen in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been proved *true*, infallibly true and precious, unutterably precious, by millions who are on earth and in heaven. It is very proper occasionally to set apart an hour for special prayer, and meditation, and self-dedication, and covenanting with God, as the God of your fathers, and your own God in particular. He will be found of them who seek him; he will guide by his counsel those who come to him for direction. While young Jabez prayed, 'O that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and let thine hand be with me to keep me from evil,' the Lord granted that which he requested. A gracious God is particularly pleased and honoured when *any*, but especially when young persons, come to him for direction. As to the profession which you may choose, I have nothing to say. The Lord as a sovereign fixes the bounds of our habitation, and he fixes as a sovereign the station which we are to occupy, and to this God I commend you, with my earnest prayers that he may

make the path of duty plain before you. Yet, if it was the Lord's pleasure, I would be highly gratified in seeing you make choice of the holy ministry, because there is no profession in which a godly man has an opportunity of doing so much for his Creator, for that Jesus who redeemed us to God by his own blood, for the souls of perishing mortals, and for his own eternal crown. O how great the reward which is laid up in heaven for the faithful, self-denied servant of the cross! 'They who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever.' It was the profession of your venerable grandfather; and after the service of his Master fifty years, it was his daily theme in his last illness, 'goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.' And as to my own pilgrimage, I can add my testimony to the power of his grace, 'goodness and mercy have followed me: my crosses have issued in comforts; the clouds which have often collected over my head have poured down their blessings; the yoke of Jesus has been easy to me, and his burden light. You have seen some stars fall from the firmament of the Church which may tend to discourage, but have you not seen others shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day? And Jesus, the mighty God, is able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless

before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. That the God of all grace may protect, prosper, and comfort you with his rich consolation, is the prayer of your affectionate father,

"A. P."

The remarks on the choice of a profession in this charming epistle are worthy of the particular attention of Christian parents. In the present day, it is to be feared that there are many such parents who would greatly prefer that their sons should enter upon some one of the paths of worldly emolument or honour, though they might not absolutely oppose their devoting themselves to Christ in the ministry of the Gospel. On the other hand, there may be those who are indulging an undue anxiety to see their sons invested with the sacred office. We have known cases in which parents, under the influence of this desire, have made the completion of the classical education of their children to hinge upon their determination to study for the ministry, and this, too, before they had given any evidence of their being the subjects of the grace of God. This is no doubt well meant, but it is exceedingly ill judged, and may be productive of very mischievous results. It puts a youth in the worst possible position for solving the solemn question of his call to the ministry. He

may want the grace of God; or, though a new man in Christ Jesus, the real bent of his mind may be towards some other employment, and yet, while in this condition, he is required to choose between entrance into the ministry and the abandonment of a begun course of liberal education. And even if the young man be guided in his decision by the Holy Spirit, he will still be in no small danger of being perplexed by doubts whether his decision to engage in the public service of Christ proceeds from respect and affection for his parents, or from his having heard the call of God. Even where parents have dedicated a child to God for this work from his infancy, and however intense may be their desires to see him in the pulpit, let them never forget that it is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus to send whom he will, and that they have no right or reason to be disappointed if he is not pleased to call the child whom they had fondly given to him to be employed in the embassy of reconciliation.

We shall conclude this chapter with a few extracts from letters to Mrs. Proudfit: he writes under date of

"February 3d, 1821.

"The weather has been intensely cold, so that they have crossed the North and East Rivers on the ice, which has not been done within forty-

one years; but, through great goodness, I escaped the least ill effect from the cold until the change of weather took place. I truly rejoice to hear that our dear J—— appears concerned about his soul; tell him to take no peace to his mind until he finds it in the Saviour's love. This is the one thing needful, better than the gain of ten thousand worlds. The vanity of everything was never more visibly to be seen than it is at present in this city. I formerly sent you the 'Register' for Mrs. W——, and now send you another number, in which you will find an address to the Western Churches. I have a long letter for the congregation, but have not time to transcribe it now; you may expect it, if the Lord spares me in health, in about ten days. With respect to your own darkness which still continues, I have no doubt that it will, in the end, give way to a pleasant dawn; and, in the mean time, I would recommend you to read 'Trail on *The Throne of Grace*,' vol. i., which I have lately perused with much spiritual comfort; and read also the following gracious assurances, John, iii., 16. Matt., xi., 28–30. Isa., i., 18; and the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John. In meditating upon these, wait the Lord's time for comfort, because I am persuaded that it will come. Although the hours of night often appear long, yet the morning comes in due sea-

son; though dreary winter now reigns over the vegetable world, yet the spring is approaching with fresh delights, and the longer you are called to wait in faith and prayer, the sweeter will be the joys of salvation when actually experienced."

"February 14th, 1821.

"I received, a few days since, a letter from our dear J——, which breathes much of that religious feeling which is the only comfort and the highest glory of man in this world of imperfection. I laboured for two or three days under the influence of a cold which prevailed in this city after the mild weather commenced, but through the Lord's mercies am now completely restored. O how light are my afflictions, infinitely light, compared to my deservings, and infinitely light compared with those of others who are no worse by nature or practice! I have been reminded, just as I sat down to write this letter, by reading of the death of Judge Younglove, Judge Sargeant, and Captain Smith, of our county, how greatly are we indebted to that forbearing God who preserves us, when so many are carried to the land of silence. Enclosed there is another circular of our society, and also a notice which has just been handed in, to show you that there is plenty to do; and I sincerely desire to adore that Master who is opening so

many doors of usefulness, and, I trust, is giving me some inclination to improve them. I also forward a copy of another letter to the congregation, which you will have read on the first Sabbath. I have also another for the youth, but it is not transcribed; if spared, I will send it to be read on the second Sabbath of March. I now begin to look forward for the approach of Spring, and sincerely long not only to return to my dear family and flock, but also to the retirement and simplicity of the country life. With respect to your own spiritual concerns, I would refer you to the promises quoted in my last letter, and also to 'Guthrie's Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ.' That the Great Preserver may protect and comfort you, is the daily and unfeigned prayer of your loving A. P."

CHAPTER VI.

LATTER YEARS.

It has been already mentioned that the year 1821 was one of severe and varied trials to the subject of this memoir. His health was so much impaired that, for a time, fears were entertained by his friends for the result; he was obliged to abstain from preaching for a considerable period, and spent the summer of that year in travelling through New-England. How deeply he felt this providential exclusion from his much-loved work of publishing the glad tidings of mercy, is shown by various passages of his diary, in which he records the frequent invitations to preach which he received during the course of his journey, but was under the necessity of declining. He thus writes,

"*Sabbath afternoon, September 16th, Worthington, Mass.* I have been travelling for my health, and attended sermon this morning with Rev. Mr. Pomeroy, and was much entreated by him and his people to preach, but dare not, owing to bodily inability. Was moved with compassion to see a great multitude of people, particularly of precious youth, and would have es-

teemed it an unspeakable privilege to address them on the important realities of eternity, but am denied this pleasure. I think that to preach Jesus and him crucified, although in much weakness both of mind and body, has been, in some degree, the delight of my life. I have often experienced seasons of enlargement in the pulpit in offering to fellow-sinners his unsearchable riches, which I shall not forget either in time or in eternity. But now I am called to be abased. My Master, by repeated returns of the fever, has been teaching me experimentally my insignificance and vileness; and in these circumstances of humiliation I desire to exercise submission. He has an absolute right to do with me as seemeth good in his sight; neither would I dare to challenge him by saying 'what doest thou?' These are precious moments when I can say, 'not my will, blessed Saviour, but thine, be done;' be thou glorified in me, and by me, whether in health or affliction; whether in life or in death. I bless the Lord, O my soul, that thou hast been spared so long in his vineyard, and enjoyed so many opportunities of testifying the Gospel of his grace."

"*Brattleborough, Vermont, September* 23*d.* Stopped in this place to spend the holy Sabbath, that sacred rest from the toils and anxieties of the present world which remaineth for the peo-

ple of God. The hour for public worship has not yet arrived, and as yesterday was the birthday of our oldest son, and as this is the birthday of our second son, I have agreed with Mrs. P. to spend some time in giving them back to that God who gave them to us, and who has so long preserved them with us. Read together Deut., xxx., 6. Isa., xliv., 3, 4. Jer., xxxii., 38–40. Isa., lix., 21. O Lord! although they are this morning remote from us, they are nigh to thee, who fillest all space at all times with thy presence. May thine everlasting arms be around them to protect them; may thy most blessed Spirit rest upon them for their sanctification and direction. Keep their bodies from every accident to which they may be exposed; but above all, keep their souls from the commission of any sin by which thy name would be dishonoured, thy Spirit grieved, the generation of thy followers offended, and their own eternal welfare endangered.

"As the congregation over which the Holy Ghost hath made me overseer are this day deprived of the dispensation of the word, I desire to commit them to the Great Shepherd of the sheep: found encouragement from Heb., xiii., 20, 21. I know that Israel's Shepherd is not confined to outward means; he can easily accomplish his gracious purposes without my

feeble instrumentality. I desire, therefore, to commit every family to the affectionate care of him who feeds his flock wherever they are scattered over the earth, like a shepherd who gathereth the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom.

"In reflecting upon the condition of my own dear flock, who are this day destitute of the ordinances of his grace, I was led to contemplate the millions in our own and in other countries whose ears are rarely saluted by the voice of mercy, and the hundreds of millions who have never seen his word nor heard his name. O Lord, 'the harvest truly is plenteous, and the labourers are few.' In mercy to perishing immortals, send forth labourers speedily into thy harvest; hasten the period when in every place incense shall be offered, and all the ends of the earth shall see thy salvation."

"*Lord's day, Salem, October 28th*, 1821. This day the supper of our Divine Lord is dispensed in the sanctuary, but through indisposition I am excluded from the privilege of participating of that holy ordinance as a member, or dispensing to the dear followers of Christ the memorials of his dying love. It is my great consolation that, although I am shut out from the cistern, the Living Fountain is open and accessible. I may meditate upon the promises of the Gospel, and the

offices of the gracious Spirit, and from these wells of salvation drink and be satisfied. I this day call upon my soul, and all that is within me, to bless the Lord that he ever brought me to the fellowship of his grace, that I can now say with some confidence, 'I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against the day of his final appearing.' Oh, the glorious prospect! I call upon my soul, and all that is within me, to bless the Lord that he ever brought me to labour in his vineyard; and that he has honoured me, though the least of all, to continue so long in it, while many of my own age, the companions of my youth, have been called out of it, some ten, some fifteen, some twenty years ago. It is all of his adorable sovereignty. By the grace of God, my life has been thus long protracted, and on his rich grace I depend, through the atoning blood of Jesus, for the remission of all my imperfections as a man and a minister. I have not loved nor served as I ought; but I hope ere long to know as I am known; to love as the angels love; to serve my dear Redeemer without imperfection, and to enjoy him without interruption forever."

With the return of health, Dr. Proudfit joyfully, and with fresh zeal, resumed his pastoral labours, though it had not yet pleased his heav-

enly Father entirely to remove all the occasions of anxiety, as appears from the following extracts of the diary:

"*November 9th*, 1822. Set apart this forenoon for special humiliation and prayer,

"1st. That the Lord would abundantly bless the congregation; that he would prosper his work both in the conversion of sinners, and in rendering his professed followers more edifying in their conversation, and more active in his service. Ezekiel, xxxvii., 1–15. John, xvi., 7–11.

"2d. That he would qualify me for more extensive usefulness in his Church. Exod., xxix., 44, 45. Psalm cxxxii., 16; lxviii., 18, 19.

"3d. That he would follow with his blessing all my writings which have been circulated abroad, and render them subservient to the advancement of his cause. 2 Cor., v., 18. Isai., xlviii., 17.

"4th. That he would manage in much mercy a matter of temporal interest which has long been the occasion of great anxiety. Psalm lvii., 2. Exodus, xiv., 3. 2 Chron., xiv., 11, 12.

"*November 16th*, 1822. Set apart this morning for the exercises of fasting and special prayer to ask of the Lord the same blessings which were the subjects of petition this day week. Read over various portions of Scripture which authorize us to appropriate seasons for these sol-

emn duties when special mercies are required, and which also show the happy issue with which they were attended. The instance of Cornelius, related in Acts, x., 30; of Daniel, as contained in the 9th chapter of his prophecy; and also of Esther, iv., 15–17. These were encouraging on account of the speedy and gracious answers which were given to these saints, when in their afflictions they wrestled with a covenant God by prayer and fasting. Cornelius, when thus employed, had a vision of the holy angel, with assurances that he and all his should be saved. While Daniel was yet speaking, the man Gabriel touched him about the time of the evening oblation, and informed him of the time when Messiah should appear to make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness. And in answer to the supplications of Esther, the heart of the king was changed, and the whole nation of the Jews was saved. Esther, v., 2, 3.

"*November* 23*d*, 1822. Set apart this morning for fasting and prayer in relation to the same subjects which were carried to the mercy-seat this day week. With respect to the subject of the last petition, felt much freedom in committing it to the wise and merciful management of my heavenly Father; attained to an entire submission to his will, from a full persuasion that all his plans are perfect; that they are wise and

holy, and just and good, and will infallibly issue in glory to himself and the eternal gratitude and joy of all who confide in his mercy. All that I have now to ask in reference to this matter is, patience to wait the Lord's time for deliverance, and implicit submission to whatever the event may be. Read over with much comfort Psalm civ., 31, 32, and was led to believe that the Lord, in his great goodness, would overrule this dispensation for my increased usefulness in this generation."

Such is the blessed privilege of the believer, to cast all his burdens, whether temporal or spiritual, upon the Lord, being careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, making known his requests unto God. And in proportion to the simplicity of his faith and trust will he find the peace of God which passeth all understanding keeping his heart and mind. These continued supplications of Dr. Proudfit for personal usefulness, and for the revival of the Lord's work in his congregation, were not in vain. The year 1824 was signalized by another plentiful effusion of the influences of the Holy Spirit upon the people of his charge. Under date of June 9th, there is a record of an agreement with some Christian friends to devote a day to the exercises of fasting and prayer "in behalf of various per-

sons distressed concerning their everlasting concerns, and that the Lord would continue to prosper his work in the congregation which he has been carrying on among them for some time in a remarkable degree, and that he would establish all those who have come out of the world by an open profession of his name." During the same year he was called to mourn the loss of one of his oldest and most warmly-attached friends, the late Divie Bethune, Esq., of New-York; the news of his decease called forth the following letter:

"Salem, September 23d, 1824

"My truly esteemed Friend,

"I have heard within a few minutes the melancholy intelligence of the death of your dear husband, and seize a few moments of leisure to express my sympathy with you under this trying dispensation of your heavenly Father. I pronounce the intelligence *melancholy;* it is so to the Church militant, of which he has long been a distinguished ornament and support; it is so to the poor and the oppressed, who have always found his ear open to their complaints, his heart ready to melt at the tale of their woes, and his hand extended to help them; it is so to me, for I recollect him as the intimate companion of my youth, and amid all the vicissitudes which must be expected in this world of change, for more than thirty years, in joy and sorrow,

in prosperity and adversity, I have found him an ardent, undissembled friend. Long have we travelled through this vale of tears, participating as men, and I trust as Christians, in the comforts and crosses of each other; it must be so to his family, to whom he has been a father more than ordinarily prudent, vigilant, affectionate, and provident; but, above all, it must be melancholy to you, madam, with whom he was united in a relation the most intimate and endearing. But, however painful the separation must prove to all whom he has left behind, the change is, without doubt, and beyond expression, joyous to himself. Free from sin and sorrow, he now sees the face of the lovely Saviour as he is; he knows him as he is known, he loves as angels love, he sings as angels sing, and enjoys, without interruption and without end, all which his capacities, expanded in the light of immortality, are capable of enjoying.

> "'O sweet employ to sing and trace
> The amazing heights and depths of grace;
> To spend, from sin and sorrow free,
> A blissful, vast eternity.'

"And now, my dear friend, entertaining such hopes in behalf of your departed husband, would you wish to recall him, if such recall was fully in your power? Could you consent to recall him from the full fruition of victory, from the actual possession of the palm, the crown, the king-

dom, the throne, to renew the conflict with Satan and the world? After he has reached the heaven of eternal joy and rest, could you consent to see him again on the tempestuous ocean, driven alternately by the winds and waves? I know that you are not so selfish as to wish that your dearest friend should exchange the joys of heaven for the sorrows of earth, or the full light of immortality for the clouds and shadows which so often envelop the spiritual pilgrim in his journey through the wilderness of this world. 'Thy Maker is thy husband, saith the Lord of Hosts,' and this heavenly friend is infinitely more merciful to sympathize under all our afflictions, infinitely more powerful to support under the pressure of difficulty, and infinitely more sufficient to supply all our wants, more ardent and unchanging in his love than any earthly connexion either is or can be. Your dear departed mother,* when on earth, often gave in her testimony that he is the *Widow's Judge*, and now, in the light of heaven, sees both wisdom and love in the removal of him who was formerly dear to her as life.

"'Then let our songs abound,
Let every tear be dry;
We're marching on Immanuel's ground
To fairer worlds on high.'

* The late Mrs. Isabella Graham.

"Thus, cistern after cistern is broken or imbittered for the gracious and important design of leading us up to him who is a fountain, unexhausted and ever open, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. My dear family have already mingled their tears with yours under this painful providence, and we unite our supplications that the same hand which has opened the wound may pour in the oil, and administer the healing balm. That grace, mercy, and peace may descend upon you and yours, from him who is the widow's stay and the orphans' help, is the prayer of yours most sincerely, A. PROUDFIT."

"To Mrs. Bethune."

Among the coadjutors of Dr. Proudfit in the good work of supplying the spiritual destitution of the new settlements, the name of the late General S. Van Rensselaer, of Albany, deserves to be mentioned with especial respect. The character of that eminent person, as distinguished for Christian excellence as for his large wealth, high social position, and political influence, is too well known to need our eulogy; yet we cannot forbear saying of him that, surrounded by many and great temptations to a life of worldliness, he consecrated himself to Christ in the morning of his days, and ever afterward, in all his relations, adorned the doctrine

of God his Saviour. The following letter is one of many testimonies which might be given of his readiness for every good work.

"Salem, January 6th, 1824.

"HONOURABLE AND ESTEEMED FRIEND,

"I have occasionally taken the liberty of appealing to your liberality, and never without success, and I trust that the present appeal will not be regarded as an intrusion. It has been no inconsiderable part of my labour, and I may add, no inconsiderable source of enjoyment for more than twenty years, to aim at promoting the diffusion of knowledge through the frontier settlements by the circulation of religious tracts; and I entertain no doubt but some of the seed sown over this barren soil will bear fruit unto life eternal. The most satisfactory assurances have been received that this service has been neither unacceptable nor unprofitable.

"It is my intention to publish for free distribution among them the following tracts, which have already undergone various editions, viz.:

"1. A Word to Mothers on the Religious Education of their Children.

"2. A Word to Children respecting their everlasting Interests.

"3. An Address to the rising Generation.

"4. An Address to the Inhabitants of the frontier Settlements.

"5. A Letter to a Member of my Church on leaving my pastoral Care.

"6. An Address to Mothers on the Importance of family Religion when this is neglected by the Father.

"7. A short Method of using a single Talent to the best advantage.

"I am also preparing for the press short tracts on the following subjects, viz.:

"1. On the Importance of secret Prayer.

"2. The Church in the House.

"3. On the Importance of attending public Ordinances.

"4. On the Advantages of attending them.

"5. An Address to the Teachers of Common Schools.

"Now, my dear friend, the object of this communication is to inquire whether, amid the multiplied appeals made to your charity, the plan is entitled to a share of your patronage? I trust you will excuse me for making this appeal to your liberality, which must long ago have been exhausted but for the plenitude of your resources, and a heart generous in the extreme, and always prompt in the employment of them for every noble and benevolent purpose.

"May the God of providence smile upon you, and be ever adding to your earthly treasures as they are expended in his service, and to his

glory. May the God of all grace minister to you from day to day those consolations of his covenant which neither your princely fortune nor the applause of the world can secure. And after a long life of usefulness and happiness, may he give you an abundant entrance to the immunities of his everlasting kingdom. This, most respected sir, is the unfeigned wish of your companion in the hopes of religion, and your fellow-labourer in the diffusion of the glorious Gospel, A. P."

The titles of the tracts mentioned in the preceding letter will serve to show the comprehensive nature of their author's benevolence. He was by no means a man of one idea; while his great concern in behalf of those for whose benefit these tracts were written was, that they might be saved, he was, at the same time, not unmindful of their temporal interests. The cause of education was one in which he took a deep interest; he was well aware of the intimate connexion between the school and the Church, and how potent an auxiliary was the schoolmaster to the pastor. And hence, next to the enjoyment of religious ordinances, his desires and efforts in behalf of the inhabitants of the new settlements were directed to the securing for them the means of education.

The design of publishing these tracts was not carried into effect, probably in consequence of the formation of the American Tract Society. In the establishment of this noble institution, Dr. Proudfit (as might have been anticipated) most heartily co-operated; at the first annual meeting of the society, he appeared upon its platform and delivered an address, in which he expressed his judgment of the important place it holds among the numerous benevolent agencies of the present day. "Although I would not contrast the comparative excellences of our various benevolent associations, as each is important in its own place, yet, in my opinion, the society for the distribution of religious tracts, in point of utility, occupies a very prominent position among the institutions of our age and country. The great amount of good which these tracts have rendered to the souls of men can never be fully estimated till the trump of the archangel is heard, and all the myriads of the ransomed are collected, and the circumstances which first led them to serious reflection are announced. For my own part, while I thank the Lord Jesus that in the riches of his grace he called me to the ministry, I also devoutly adore him that he early directed my attention to this labour of love. More than twenty years since, a small society was formed in our village for publishing and circulating tracts,

and I have been often refreshed and enlivened by hearing of their success in winning souls to the Saviour. One who is now preaching the salvation of Jesus to a tribe of benighted heathen on our continent dated his conversion from reading one of these tracts, which he accidentally met with in the State of Massachusetts. The relation of the following fact will, I trust, be deemed no intrusion, as it may show how the disconsolate followers of the Lamb are comforted and established by this exercise of Christian charity. During an excursion through the northern parts of this state, as I travelled through the woods of Oswegatchie, I noticed in the depths of the forest, far from the habitations of men, a little hut with no other door than a suspended blanket; as I approached the cottage, a woman drew aside the blanket to see the stranger that was passing along; her face was furrowed with age, and still more by cares and privations. On going into to her humble abode, and entering into conversation with her, I found that she was one of those followers of Jesus who had been chosen and tried in the furnace of affliction. Upon inquiring if she had any books to entertain herself, excluded as she was from the advantages of religious conversation, and from the ordinances of the sanctuary, she brought me her library, which consisted of the tracts circulated by our society

in Salem, together with that most excellent little work of Boston, viz., 'The Crook in the Lot.' A traveller who had stopped at her solitary residence became much interested in reading one of her tracts, and offered her in exchange this copy of 'The Crook.'

"These facts, to which many similar ones might be added, are mentioned from no motives of ostentation, and I trust they will not be deemed either impertinent or unseasonable on the present occasion. They show how much glory is brought to our Master, and how much joy to his dear children, by this method of well-doing. I have no doubt but hundreds, and perhaps thousands of spiritual pilgrims in the new settlements and the Canadas have been cheered by the perusal of tracts gratuitously sent forth from our villages and cities. All the individuals who have been thus animated in their spiritual course will never be known until they are met in the regions of bliss, and it is then discovered through whose influence these little messengers of consolation were sent through their desolate borders. They will perhaps mention that by some adverse providence their lot was cast in the wilderness, where the joyful sound rarely reached them on the Sabbath, but these wells of salvation were there unexpectedly opened to refresh their weary souls, like the spring which Hagar found in the wilderness of Beersheba."

The following sentences descriptive of the views and feelings in which the Tract Society originated, are quoted, not so much to show the catholic spirit of their author, but because they express a sentiment which many who once professed to act upon it seem at the present time in great danger of forgetting.

"I hail this event (the formation of the A. T. S.) because of the harmony of Christian feeling which the measure manifested, and which it is calculated to promote. My soul is filled with emotions too big for utterance, as I meet the friends of our common Saviour assembled to deliberate on the best means of promoting the common salvation; one day convened in the Bible Society to consult about the translation of the word of Truth, or its distribution among the destitute; on another, deliberating to what benighted portion of the race to send the herald of salvation, or how to repair the desolations of Zion among ourselves; or on this day in the Tract Society mingling their councils in selecting and sending abroad those tracts which are, by God's blessing, most adapted to alarm, instruct, or edify. These meetings of Christians, without respect to sectarian interest or section of country, are animating in the extreme; they correspond to the genius of the Gospel, which breathes peace on earth; they also help to ex-

ercise that mutual affection and confidence which ought to be cherished by the followers of Him who is emphatically styled the Prince of Peace. Those halcyon days of harmony and peace for which our venerable fathers supplicated and eagerly longed are now (in measure) realized by us, their favoured sons and successors.

I trust you will excuse me, Mr. President, while through you I adjure my fellow-labourers in this society, by all their solicitude for the glory of that Prince around whose standard we are now rallying, and for the extension of his kingdom, that all local and sectarian jealousy be suppressed. Let every individual, whatever place he may occupy in this institution, organized under circumstances so auspicious, aim at keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. God forbid that the hand of the demon of discord should in our age, or in any future age, sunder those sacred ties by which we are united."

During the twenty years which have elapsed since these words were spoken, great changes have occurred in the condition of the American Church. Rome has attained a power and an influence in our free republic which at that day no one imagined to be possible; but the change which has taken place in the feelings of those branches of the Church which united in forming

the Bible and the Tract Societies is, on some accounts, much more to be deplored than the increase of Romanism in numbers and influence. The evil spirit of division has been at work among those whose united efforts should, without ceasing, be directed against their common enemies. Within the last ten years there has been a manifest revival of the spirit of sect; there has been in the denominations adverted to an increasing tendency to retire within themselves, and to do individually what they once proposed to attempt conjointly. The Presbyterians and Congregationalists are beginning to attach great importance to their respective peculiarities—even to those which for many years were regarded as matters of indifference. Now no sensible person will deny that this regard for the denomination to which we belong is good, and productive of good results, if it be kept within proper bounds; but it may, on the other hand, be indulged to excess; we may become so wrapped up in "our Church" as to be quite regardless of those other sections of the visible Church which, equally with ourselves, "hold the Head, even Christ," and thus be practically forgetful of the fact that we have a common Christianity. In a time like the present, when the denominational spirit is growing, there is danger lest one body after another should desert that

broad and noble platform on which they have all so often confessed that they have "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father who is above all, and through all, and *in* all." Against this danger it becomes every catholic-minded Christian to guard; it becomes all who love Christ's cause to labour to prevent such desertion, not by asking men to be indifferent to any truth, small or great, but by inducing them to act upon the rule sanctioned by the Church's Head, "whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things."

From a letter of the Rev. W. A. Halleck to Dr. Proudfit, dated September 8th, 1826, it appears that some of the tracts whose titles are given on a former page, were among the earliest issued by the committee. "Your several favours," he writes, "accompanied by tracts for publication by the American Tract Society, and containing suggestions concerning others, have all been laid before the Publishing Committee, and have been perused, as well as the tracts. For the prompt and kind encouragement and support which God has put it into your heart thus to afford to this rising institution, accept our grateful acknowledgments. The following have been sanctioned by the committee, viz.: 'The Single Talent Improved;' 'A Letter addressed to a

Member of his Congregation,' &c.; 'Maternal Duty, showing the Importance of maintaining Family Worship;' 'A word to Mothers;' 'An Address to those who had removed from his Congregation to the Frontier Settlements.'

"You have long been a father and friend of the Tract cause; we rejoice that there are some such in the land, and we rely on an interest in your prayers, and your steady and long-continued co-operation."

Before leaving this subject, it will not be out of place to give Dr. Proudfit's views in regard to the "volume enterprise," an enterprise in which the society has been honoured to do vast good, though of late it has occasioned much controversy. They are expressed in a letter to Mr. Hallock, dated

"Salem, May, 1832.

"Respected Friend,

"Your communication respecting the circulation of the volumes of the American Tract Society was received last evening. In my opinion, the plan proposed may, under the divine blessing, be incalculably useful, both as it respects the general interests of the Church of God and the salvation of individuals. The writings of those holy men, so long honoured for the conversion of sinners, thrown among the mass of our population, may not only create a taste for general

reading, but may also tend to exclude those light, frothy compositions, which, within the last twenty years, have been too commonly circulated, and have done so much to vitiate the public taste.

Perhaps there is no mode by which a pastor can exert his influence more profitably for the promotion of sound morality and living piety among the people of his charge, than by encouraging the distribution of such writings as are specified in your collection, and I sincerely wish that they were in the possession of every family in my congregation. Although Baxter's Saints' Rest has been familiar to me from my boyhood, and hundreds of copies have passed through my hands, yet I recently read every page of it with delight to my own soul, and, I trust, with profit as a minister intrusted with managing the spiritual interests of others. I have procured at different times copies of the 'Essays to do Good,' 'Baxter's Call,' 'Persuasives to Early Piety,' for the purpose of loaning them among my people, particularly among the youth, and have found that they were read with great avidity, and, I believe, with saving advantage. Indeed, my attention for more than forty years has been directed to the promotion of religion in this town and through the frontier settlements by the circulation of tracts and volumes on practical subjects, and the most gratifying intelli-

gence has been received of the happy results. I will therefore most cheerfully co-operate with the society in the execution of the plan proposed. I remain your friend in the common Saviour, A. PROUDFIT."

Another subject in which Dr. Proudfit took a deep interest was the spiritual welfare of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He was one of the earliest and warmest friends of the "American Society for meliorating the condition of the Jews;" he often took part in the proceedings of its anniversaries, and on one occasion delivered an address containing sentiments which cannot be too earnestly urged upon the attention of all branches of Christ's true Church.

"Whatever diversity of opinion," said he, "may be entertained of our obligation to support other charitable institutions, with respect to the dispersed of Israel there can be but one sentiment and voice. The moment we begin to feel a degree of apathy in our efforts for their benefit, let our zeal be rekindled by the consideration that it is the offspring of Abraham, the kindred of Isaiah, of Paul, and, above all, the kindred of the Saviour of the world, 'according to the flesh,' whose spiritual delusions we profess to pity, whose conversion we have associated to promote. If the society designed for their

relief were neglected, nay, if it be not fostered by our warmest wishes, our most fervent prayers, our liberal contributions, our united, unceasing exertions, such neglect would be an indelible stain upon the character of the Gentile churches. That nation is most emphatically our benefactor; and through their hands, as the sacred depository, the precious boon of pardon, adoption, and eternal life, is this evening tendered for your acceptance and mine.

"In deliberating about the recovery of 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' we are not coolly to ask what obstacles are to be surmounted, or what pecuniary expense must be incurred. The only question to be considered is this, are the Jews to be brought in? shall all Israel be saved? And with respect to the certainty of this event, it is a most animating truth, that all the prophets and apostles of the Lamb have, in succession, given their united and most explicit testimony. True, they beheld, with mournful hearts, a long, dreary night collecting and brooding over their ungrateful, impenitent people; their city was to be laid in ruins; their temple—the pride of their country, and the admiration of the world—was to be levelled with the ground, so that one stone of the magnificent edifice should not be left upon another; their tribes, outcasts from their God, should remain 'many days without a

king, without a prince;' no urim and thummim should any longer communicate the divine will; but, through the gloom of that long and cheerless night, they beheld the dawn of an auspicious morning: for it is written, 'afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God; they shall seek the Lord and his goodness in the latter day. My tabernacle, also, shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forever.'

"With these sure words of prophecy that Israel shall be saved, what remains for us but, from motives of philanthropy to them as members of our common family, from feelings of gratitude to them as our munificent benefactors, in obedience to the command of our Master, in reliance upon his promise, what remains for us, I say, but to persevere in our labours of love for a people so long favoured of Jehovah? We need not entertain a single doubt of our success in this holy and honourable enterprise. The same 'zeal of the Lord of hosts' which displayed his justice in executing vengeance on their unbelief, will also display the overflowings of his mercy in gathering them from the four winds of heaven, whither they are scattered. The hand of divine indignation lopped off this 'branch,' and

has permitted it to lie for ages withered and peeled, without sap or verdure, but the hand of mercy will ere long 'graft it again into the true vine,' causing it to flourish to the glory of his grace in the eyes of an astonished, adoring world. Is not this prospect as 'life from the dead?' Come, then, and while we are devising the means of their salvation, let us ask a coal of the same fire by which their souls were inflamed while they deliberated about ours. Let us look that the mantle of their Elijahs may be caught, at least, by some of us Elishas, their successors in office. Let us go forth to the same work, animated by the same spirit, until not merely in Palestine, but through every region of the earth, 'instead of the thorn the fir-tree shall come up, and instead of the brier the myrtle-tree, which may be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off.' Israel's God smile benignly on all the exertions which are made to promote the spiritual benefit of Israel; and to thee, Jehovah, in covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, their God and our God, shall be ascribed by all the ransomed of their tribes glory in the highest, world without end, Amen."

For many years the society before which the address, of which an extract has been given, was delivered, seemed to be like a withered plant. The prophecies concerning Israel appear to have

been but imperfectly understood by those who had the chief management of its concerns; their plans were not wisely laid, and the melancholy result of their failure was the gradual extinction of the interest in behalf of Israel which had been awakened in the American Church. But, though the plant was withered, the God of Israel did not permit it utterly to die. Within the last few years the society has been revived; its grand aim now is, not to establish a home for the Jew in a land where the Lord never designed that he should permanently dwell, but simply to testify to him "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

In the year 1829 the American Bible Society adopted the memorable resolution to supply the whole destitute population of the United States with the Holy Scriptures. That the idea of this good work originated in the mind of Dr. Proudfit is more than we are entitled to assert; this much, however, is certain, that he was one of the earliest, most laborious, and successful agents in accomplishing the grand and benevolent design. From the correspondence which passed between the Washington County Society and the managers of the parent institution, it appears that to this auxiliary—for many years one of the most efficient in the country—belongs the honour of having been the first to propose the meas-

ure. Dr. Proudfit was the chairman of the committee appointed by the county society to bring the subject before the managers in New-York, and in a letter to the Rev. J. C. Brigham, under date of February 4th, 1829, he says: "At our annual meeting, held in January, 1828, agents were appointed to have the whole county explored, that the number of families destitute of the Scriptures might be ascertained, and their wants supplied. At our meeting in January, 1829, our society has taken a more expanded view, and contemplated the destitute families not merely of our county, but throughout the United States, and expressed a solicitude to have them supplied without the least unnecessary delay. They have therefore appointed a committee to communicate to you their wishes, and, through you, to suggest to the parent society at its next anniversary the adoption of a resolution to have every destitute family supplied within two years. They have directed us, at the same time, to pledge the sum of five thousand dollars towards the execution of the purpose, to be paid within two years from the adoption of the aforesaid resolution; and if this sum is not considered equal to our proportion, only undertake the design, and relying on the God of providence, we will increase it.

"You will excuse us, a remote auxiliary, in

making this suggestion, but we assure you that no ordinary anxiety was evinced by our society to have the measure immediately adopted; and, from the experiment which has been already made in supplying towns, counties, and even states, we are fully persuaded there is not only ability, but liberality enough in the friends of our Master to aid you in the achievement of this mighty and magnificent project. Only let the motion be brought forward at the next annual meeting, and it will be adopted, and in an humble reliance on the Divine sufficiency it will be accomplished. 'The earth is to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord,' and he who hath spoken the word has the silver and the gold, and the hearts of all who possess them, at his sovereign disposal. And is not the design worthy of an experiment?"

The sum which the Washington County auxiliary engaged to raise is a large one, especially when it is considered that the county is not of great extent, and that its population is almost exclusively agricultural; yet the pledge thus given was redeemed within the time specified. These circumstances were probably not without their influence in inducing the managers in New-York to entreat Dr. Proudfit to undertake an agency on their behalf. Such an application was made to him, and, having obtained the con-

sent of his congregation, he devoted himself to the work. In the conclusion of the report of his labours during the first year, he says: "Upon a survey of the year, with its labours in the service of the society, so far as the divine will can be ascertained from the aspect of providence, my Master has smiled on the undertaking; and this short period has been connected with occurrences, the impression of which cannot be effaced in time or eternity. My congregation readily consented to my acceptance of the appointment, and some of them, with tears, told me not to return from New-England until my work was accomplished. On my occasional visits home during the season they always received me with joy, and again parted with me without a murmur. I have travelled in the course of the year about three thousand miles, in five different states, attended about fifty public meetings, and had intercourse with Christians of almost all denominations, and witnessed but one feeling of respect for the enterprise in which we are engaged." During the second year of his agency he again visited nearly all the Eastern and Middle States.

A brief passage of his ordinary diary of this period may here be introduced, as showing that, engrossed as he was with the great object of his agency, and of course exposed to manifold

distractions, he still carried about with him the same habits of meditative devotion which he maintained when enjoying the quietness of home. It is dated

"*Rockingham, Vermont, June 27th.* Set out a few days since to visit some of the Eastern States in relation to the supply of the destitute of the United States with the Holy Scriptures, and being stopped on my journey by the failure of the stage, desired to set apart some time for remembering all the way by which the Lord, my covenant God, hath led me these forty years in the wilderness. Although ten thousand thousand mercies, altogether unmerited, have been heaped upon me, a poor, insignificant worm of the dust, mercies which it will be the pleasure and employment of eternity to recount, yet there are four memorable occasions in which the Lord, in his infinite condescension, visibly and most remarkably appeared in my behalf, disappointing my fears and exceeding my hopes. One instance of his interposition occurred in July, 1791, while I was a student in Columbia College; another in September, 1815; another in May, 1822; and another during the present month. Upon all these occasions my character and comfort as a man, and my usefulness as a minister, appeared deeply involved in the issue. The cloud hung over my head portentous and

awful, threatening to burst forth in the destruction of my peace and reputation, while, to human appearance, there was no possibility of escape: perplexity and ruin were seemingly unavoidable; but, O my God! how unsearchable are thy councils, and thy ways are past finding out; my limited wisdom was completely confounded; I could devise no method of deliverance; yet, by means of which I had no conception, thou hast interposed, and wrought salvation for me. After permitting me to be long tossed upon the boisterous ocean, and my ship to be covered with wave after wave, thou didst speak, and lo! there was a great calm. In all these instances, I have found, in my own delightful experience, that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are thy ways, my God, higher than my ways, and thy thoughts than my thoughts. And this morning, at the recollection of those repeated interpositions in my behalf, I desire devoutly to set up my ebenezer, and say, 'hitherto hath Jehovah helped;' they are the Lord's doings, displays of adorable sovereignty, of all-controlling power, of unsearchable wisdom, and infinite condescension and love. They are now, and must remain forever, marvellous in my eyes. 'O! that my words were written in a book, that they were graven with an iron pen in the rock

forever, because in the day when I cried thou answeredst me.'—Psalm cxxxviii., 3.

"These dispensations I would mark down for my own support and encouragement in every future emergency, and for the support of any afflicted follower of Jesus who may read them from age to age. 'It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes;' bless the Lord, ye his angels, for these manifestations of his mercy to me, who am less than the least of all saints."

How animating and instructive are these records of God's gracious interposition in behalf of his people. In all ages they have testified in the language of one of old, who had been subjected to many an appalling danger, and experienced many a wonderful rescue, "if it had not been the Lord who was on our side when men rose up against us, then had they swallowed us up quick. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." And one of the great purposes of Christian biography is to show that all the promises of our God are like himself, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

After his return home from the arduous and fatiguing labours in behalf of those who were suffering "a famine, not of bread and water, but of the word of the Lord," Dr. Proudfit's labours

in his own congregation appear to have been attended with a special influence from on high. Salem, in common with so many other parishes in various parts of the land, enjoyed a time of refreshing from on high during the memorable years 1830, 31.

The following extract from the diary of this period is worthy of being introduced, if for no other reason, at least for the striking incident which it records:

"*Sabbath Evening, May 27th.* This day have dispensed the ordinance of the Holy Supper without assistance from any of my brethren; felt much depressed for several days previous, owing to a variety of occurrences, but the Lord, in his great goodness, disappointed my fears. Although the weather was unfavourable, yet the assembly was very large, and I experienced unusual freedom in every part of the service, and an uncommon solemnity pervaded the audience. Now, Lord, to the glory of thy grace I here record it, for my own encouragement, and the encouragement of others who serve thee in the ministry of reconciliation, that thou art a very present help in the time of need. Oh the riches of thy forbearance, that thou art not dealing with me according to my unbelieving fears. I am ashamed this afternoon, and blush for my distrust, notwithstanding all thou hast promised in

thy word, and all that I have frequently experienced of thy faithfulness to thy promises. Truly they shall not be ashamed that wait on thee. None of all the apostate family of man is more insignificant or undeserving than I am; yet, O Lord! how bountifully thou art dealing with me; how liberally have I shared of thy goodness, both in a temporal and spiritual respect; how great was thy condescension in calling me to the ministry, in supporting me so long in the discharge of its duties; in preserving me, notwithstanding all my self-sufficiency, from the pollution of the world; in continuing peace in the congregation, and, I trust, in crowning my labours with a degree of success both towards sinners and saints. 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.' I would this day be more entirely thine. Amen and Amen.

"On the Monday which immediately succeeded the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, the following interesting occurrence took place: A few minutes previous to the commencement of our public services on the morning of the Sabbath, that reproof of our Saviour to his apostle, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' was powerfully impressed upon my mind, and appeared to open so satisfactorily to my understanding, that I felt constrained to adopt it as the subject of my discourse. During the pray-

er and other public services, my mind was particularly directed towards those who were walking in darkness and pressed down by the burden of their sins, and I felt enlargement in exhibiting Jesus with his suitableness and sufficiency, as anointed of the Father to bind up the broken heart, and comfort the mourner. On the Monday following, a young gentleman, an entire stranger, called upon me and desired conversation; he informed me that he had once made a profession of religion, but, through the snares of the world, and the influence of unholy associates, he had lost his first love, and, for a time, had turned aside from the holy commandment; that for several days he had been labouring under awful remorse of conscience, especially for his guilt in denying the Lord that bought him; that he had reached our village on Saturday evening, and during his attendance in the sanctuary, the prayers and all the other services seemed immediately suited to his situation; that his burdened soul obtained such relief by a contemplation of the offices and fulness of the Saviour, that he felt a strong desire to renew his covenant engagements over the symbols of his body and blood, but, being a stranger, did not feel at liberty to come forward. He apologized for the freedom he had taken in calling, but mentioned that he could not retire from the village without in-

forming me of the fact; he waited to attend our family devotions, when I marked for him a variety of promises adapted to his exercises. About a year afterward, in passing through our village, he called upon me a second time, when he appeared to remain steadfast in his Christian profession, and to be walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Learn from this occurrence, O my soul, the importance of living by faith, of exercising an entire dependance on the influences of the divine Spirit for direction. The wind bloweth where it listeth. He is an adorable Sovereign in the selection of instruments for the execution of his purposes of mercy, and for the time when, and the manner in which he will give efficacy to their administration. Our Lord must pass through Samaria to impart instruction to a woman of that country; Philip the Evangelist must go down to the desert of Judea, that he might preach Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch; Paul must abide in Corinth, because much people were to be saved in that city. Although preparations for the pulpit should be made with diligence, yet if the Spirit, in his sovereignty, apparently directs to another subject, let not his influences be resisted; he can assist at the moment for the accomplishment of his gracious purposes. While I desire hereafter to have an Isaac ready on the altar, yet if a lamb

is unexpectedly presented for a burnt offering, let me not dare to refuse it."

There is another very striking incident of Dr. Proudfit's life which may be introduced in this connexion, and is thus related by his son, Professor Proudfit: "One day a man called on my father who had been a soldier in the Revolutionary War. He appeared, in conversation, to be a man of piety, and of deep spiritual experience. His object was to obtain books and tracts to take with him to the distant West, whither he was about to emigrate. My father inquired his reason for removing from a region where he enjoyed the privileges of religion, which must be so precious to him. He replied that it pained him to the heart to leave the ordinances and the society of his Christian friends, but that his large and growing family obliged him to do so. It appeared to be 'the will of the great King of Heaven that he should not own a dollar clear, nor a foot of land;' he was content to make both ends meet; but, as matters stood, he could not even do this. He was requested to wait a few days, in the hope that something would turn up to his advantage. Within that time, a beautiful farm of about one hundred acres, in a retired and romantic situation, and about two miles distant from my father's house, was offered for sale. It was purchased by my father, and James Shields (for

such was the person referred to) was placed upon it *on shares*. There, for many years, the good man 'walked with God,' and proved by his holy and zealous life a rich blessing to the neighbourhood. To my father he was an invaluable spiritual counsellor; often, in his seasons of despondency, he would mount his horse and ride away to James Shields, and derive strength and comfort from 'hearty counsel' with one who 'dwelt in the secret place of the Most High.' Not a stroke of a pen ever passed between them during the many years in which they were related as landlord and tenant. My father used jokingly to say that if there was an odd grain of corn, he knew that James Shields would give it to him. He exerted himself much to procure the old soldier's pension, and through the kind offices of Captain Bleecker, of New-York, under whom he had served in the war, he succeeded.

"When the tidings were received that the pension had been allowed, great was his joy, and large the prospective appropriations which he made to this and the other benevolent object. This was afterward a standing topic of jest with my father at the expense of his old friend, for he enjoyed his pension only one year. When the oath was exacted of the pensioner that he could not obtain a subsistence without it, he gave it up, saying that he 'was a poor man, but, by the help

of the great King of Heaven, he had always got along, and he knew he always should.' This good man was in the habit of retiring to the woods near his house, and spending much time in prayer. He often had a distinct and certain expectation of future events, which, in these seasons of solitary communion with God, had been impressed upon his mind through the medium of a passage of Scripture, or, as he expressed it, 'had come to him in a promise.' He was deeply read in the lore of the old divines; and well do I remember his attitude as he sat, at the resting-hour of noon or in the evening, with his old spectacles on, poring over a volume of Boston or the Erskines. Often has my father said of him, as his bent and ill-clad figure has passed our house on his way to the church (of which he was the sexton), that he would outshine the kings and nobles of this world in the day when the righteous should 'shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.'

"He was farther remarkable as a very early example of 'total abstinence.' He had brought the maxims of the camp, in this particular, to the farm, and had always thought that a little spirit was quite indispensable, especially in harvest-time; but one day, when at work in his field, a respectable farmer, who had been an exemplary member of the Church, passed by in a state

of intoxication. James Shields, with his accustomed 'plainness of speech,' accosted him, and 'reasoned of temperance' so closely and pungently that the other exclaimed, 'well, I will give it up if you will.' He was, to his great surprise, promptly taken at his word, and James Shields never tasted spirituous liquor from that hour, substituting merely a cup of tea at dinner for his accustomed stimulus, and finding himself, as he often said, quite as able to bear labour and exposure as before. He entered into his rest in the year 1830, and was followed to the grave by one of the largest funerals ever seen in Washington county."

During the summer of 1833, Dr. Proudfit spent some weeks in Orange county, New-York, in behalf of the Theological Seminary of the Associate Reformed Church, which had been revived after a suspension of about seven years, and established at Newburgh. At a later period he resumed the work, and continued to devote to it as much time as his other duties would allow. In this connexion it may be mentioned, that in 1835 he was chosen by the Synod to be Professor of Pastoral Theology, and, for a while, he was in the hopes of being able to spend so much time at Newburgh, during each session of the seminary, as would have sufficed for the delivery of a short course of lectures in that branch

of theological instruction; but the nature of his other engagements was such as to prevent the carrying out this design, and he accordingly resigned the office in 1837. At the same time, it should be observed, that he continued to feel a deep interest in the institution, frequently attending and taking part in the examination of the students, and in other ways labouring to promote its welfare.

Towards the close of the year 1833, Dr. Proudfit was earnestly entreated by the Young Men's Bible Society, in the City of New-York, to lend them his aid in raising a considerable sum which they had pledged themselves to contribute for the circulation of the Scriptures in foreign lands. He yielded to their request, "impressed," as he observes in his diary, "with the magnitude of the undertaking, as it involved the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of the inhabitants of heathen lands." At a most inclement season of the year he proceeded to the city, and, by the blessing of God, was enabled very speedily to accomplish the object of his visit. Under date of January 12th, 1834, he writes, "The God of the Bible has singularly smiled upon the enterprise, and has opened the hearts of his dear children in this city to contribute promptly and liberally. Scarcely three weeks have elapsed since the work (of raising

$10,000) was commenced, and the pledge is substantially redeemed." At a meeting of the Board of Managers held January 13th, 1834, the following resolutions were adopted, viz.:

"1. That this Board feel deeply the success with which God has crowned the undertaking of this society to raise the sum of $10,000 for the distribution of the Bible in foreign lands.

"2. That under God we are indebted for that success to the prayerful and untiring exertions of our venerable friend, the Rev. Dr. A. Proudfit.

"3. That Dr. Proudfit be presented with a certificate of life membership, and a copy of the best publication of the American Bible Society, as an acknowledgment in part of our grateful sense of his services."

In 1835 Dr. Proudfit was induced to ask for a dissolution of the relation which had so long and happily existed between himself and the congregation of Salem. This step was taken in consequence of his election to the office of secretary of the New-York Colonization Society. We are unable to state the particular reasons which led him to retire from a charge with which he had been connected for forty years, but we may be sure from his whole character, and especially his habitual prayerfulness, that so important a step was not taken without repeated and earnest seeking for divine guidance. Neither

can we suppose him to have taken it without the fullest conviction that the Lord's voice to him was, Go. One thing, however, is very certain, that his removal from Salem, and his entrance into another sphere of labour, was neither occasioned nor accompanied by any abatement of the affectionate regards of his congregation, as appears from the correspondence which took place between himself and the members of his session a short time after his establishment in his new office. The high estimation in which he was held by the whole community of the town of Salem, a community in which he had spent his youth, his mature manhood, and his old age, is manifested in the series of resolutions adopted at a general meeting of the inhabitants of the village. These proceedings well deserve a place in this memoir, for they are honourable alike to the community of Salem, and to the venerable pastor who had so long gone out and in among them, testifying the Gospel of the grace of God. Testimonies such as this to a minister removing to a new field of labour are by no means common. Indeed, it is truly melancholy to reflect upon the numerous instances which have occurred within the last few years in which the pastoral relation has been dissolved under circumstances of the most painful kind. Not a few ministers, after many years of faithful, successful,

and self-denying labour, have been cast off by congregations abundantly able to sustain them, and to supply their lack of service growing out of the infirmities of age. No doubt, in some cases, ministers who are thus treated are themselves in some measure to blame, by dropping their habits of study as they advance in years; still, we cannot help regarding this as one of the deplorable results of the low view of the relation between pastor and people which many persons and many congregations have been accustomed to take.

The proceedings already mentioned were had within a few weeks after Dr. Proudfit's retirement from his pastoral charge: they are as follows:

"In pursuance of public notice previously given, the inhabitants of the town of Salem met at the Rev. Mr. Whiton's church, on Thursday, the 25th of November, 1835, to manifest their respect for the unqualified worth and distinguished services of the Rev. Dr. Proudfit.

"The meeting was organized by the appointment of the Rev. John Whiton, Chairman, and John M'Murray, Esq., Secretary. The object of the meeting was then stated, and a committee was appointed, consisting of the following gentlemen: Messrs. Crary, Welles, Whiton, M'Murray, M'Alister, and Coon; who, having retired, returned and reported as follows:

"'It is not of Dr. Proudfit merely as pastor of the Associate Reformed Church of this village that we speak, nor is it as the great advocate for instructing and Christianizing the heathen, nor is it as the active, benevolent, and liberal member of the Bible, Missionary, and other societies, but it is to pay him our sincere respects as our neighbour and friend, who, after more than forty years spent among us in faithfully exerting himself for the good of mankind, is now called to act upon a more extended theatre as the agent of the Colonization Society in the City of New-York; and although he has been but a short time absent, we cannot but perceive the vacancy which that absence has occasioned; his efforts having heretofore, in a pre-eminent degree, been directed to the literary advancement of the rising generation, his departure will occasion to them a loss which they cannot expect will be soon supplied. The able and distinguished men who have been nurtured and partially educated in this place during the last forty years, known in the pulpit, on the bench, at the bar, and as the heads of our seminaries of learning, have been favoured by his untiring exertions.' The committee also reported the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted.

"Resolved, That, entertaining the highest sentiments of respect for the private worth of the

Rev. Dr. Proudfit, and of gratitude for his distinguished public services, and deeply regretting his departure, we tender to him the cheerful expression of our warmest personal regard, and our fervent wishes that, in every sphere of benevolence in which he may be called to move, he may long enjoy, what we believe to be the object of his highest ambition and most ardent aspirations, *the luxury of doing good.*

"Resolved, That while, in the discharge of his present duties, it may be necessary for him to reside in the City of New-York, we shall at all times greet his return among us with grateful emotions.

"Resolved, That the proceedings of this meeting be signed by the chairman and secretary of the same, and forwarded to the Rev. Dr. Proudfit, and published.

(Signed), "JOHN WHITON, *Chairman.*
"JOHN M'MURRAY, *Secretary.*"

To this communication, so grateful to his feelings, coming as it did not merely from the people of his own charge, but also from persons connected with other branches of the Church, Dr. Proudfit sent the following reply:

"Colonization Rooms,
"New-York, Dec. 10th, 1835.

"GENTLEMEN,

"I have received and read, with no ordinary

emotions, the resolutions adopted at your meeting on the 26th ult. The approbation of the honourable and the good is, to a generous mind, the highest reward of a temporal nature to which it can aspire. The very place where your meeting was held, a church connected with a different religious denomination, is an additional circumstance enhancing in its value this testimony of esteem and affection, as it shows that in the present age, when dissensions are so mournfully disturbing the peace and dishonouring the name of the Christian Church, the 'unity of the spirit' has been so happily preserved among us.

"Every wish for my personal welfare expressed in your communication is cordially reciprocated for you and yours; and, indeed, not only for the citizens of Salem, but of the county of Washington, to whom, for their many testimonies of respect, I owe a debt of gratitude which cannot be cancelled in time.

"My removal to another field of labour, which in your partiality you have pronounced a loss, did not arise from any want of attachment to you, or of solicitude for your interests, or from the prospect of increasing my temporal comfort, as I never anticipate happier days on earth than I enjoyed going in and out among you. I trust that I have been impelled by other and higher considerations in entering the station I now oc-

cupy; by motives of sympathy with afflicted Africa, whose children in both hemispheres have been *scattered and peeled* by the ruffian hand of unprincipled white men. I would consider it an unspeakable honour to be employed as the instrument of advancing the interests of an institution which, in my opinion, originated in the purest benevolence; which, amid foul detraction, and unprovoked and unremitting opposition, has already succeeded in replacing on the shores of Africa thousands of her emancipated sons, and is yet destined, under the divine benediction, not only to meliorate the condition of her enslaved population among us, but ultimately to diffuse the blessings of civilization and Christianity among her native tribes.

"Respected friends, for that large measure of comfort, personal and domestic, which I have long enjoyed, I feel deeply indebted to your prayers, and the highest favour which I have now to solicit is their continuance; and 'that mercy, and grace, and peace may be multiplied on you,' and the churches with which you are respectively connected, is the unfeigned wish of your servant for Jesus' sake,

(Signed), "ALEXANDER PROUDFIT.

"To Rev. John Whiton, John M'Murray, Esq., Hon. John Crary, Messrs. W. A. Welles, Archibald M'Alister, and Rufus Coon."

The correspondence between the session of the Church of Salem and Dr. Proudfit is of a somewhat later date than that of the proceedings already detailed. It may be proper to mention that this delay probably arose from the peculiar circumstances of the congregation for about two years after the doctor's removal. The Rev. James Lillie was installed as successor about the close of the same year (1835); but, in the course of the ensuing summer, Mr. Lillie removed to Rhinebeck, having received and accepted a call from the Reformed Dutch Church of that place. Another vacancy occurred, which continued until the settlement of the Rev. Ebenezer Halley, in the autumn of 1838; and, at the first meeting of the session after his installation, the following letter, written by an excellent member, whose name occurs in an earlier part of this work, was unanimously adopted, and sent to their former pastor:

"Salem, 17th September, 1838.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"We, the elders of the Associate Reformed Church of Salem, at our first meeting under our present pastor, reflecting on all the ways in which the Lord our God hath led us and our fathers these many years in this wilderness, the afflictions we have endured, the evils we have felt or feared, and the deliverances we have experi-

enced, are compelled to exclaim, 'the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad; he hath remembered his mercy and his truth towards us;' and while we would say, 'not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and thy truth's sake,' we would in nowise forget the instruments that he hath employed in doing his work; and especially we delight in the remembrance of your long and faithful labours among us; 'we know after what manner you have been with us at all seasons, and have kept nothing back from us that was profitable to us, but have showed us, and have taught us publicly and from house to house, that by the space of more than forty years you have ceased not to warn every one night and day, with tears.' And not only while our connexion as pastor and people continued did we enjoy your ardent and unremitting exertions, but since that connexion was dissolved we have experienced many tokens of affection and labours of love, of which we hope ever to retain a grateful recollection; but we were especially gratified that it was so ordered by the Head of the Church that we should enjoy your labours and fellowship on the late occasion of our communion and the installation of our present pastor. It is indeed pleasing to reflect that our former beloved pastor, with whom we had so long taken sweet

counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company; who had so long been delivering to us messages of mercy, and breaking to us the bread of life; under whose ministrations we have so often said, 'it is good to be here,' should once more dispense unto us the memorials of our Redeemer's death, and officially place over us the man of our choice as his successor. May the spirit of Elijah rest upon Elisha! And now, we most fervently pray that your useful labours may be long continued; that the evening of your days may be unclouded and serene; and that, when at some remote period you shall have finished your course, you may receive your Divine Master's welcome, 'well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,' and 'having turned many to righteousness,' shine as a star in the kingdom of our common Redeemer for ever and ever. With sentiments of high esteem and cordial affection, we remain yours, in our common Lord,

"THOMAS COLLINS, JOHN BEATY,
"ISAAC GETTY, JAMES B. STEVENSON,
"JOHN M'MURRAY, DAVID B. THOMPSON.
"THOMAS STEVENSON,

"To the Rev. Dr. Alexander Proudfit."

Dr. Proudfit's reply to this affectionate letter is as follows:

"New-York, October 16th, 1838.

"BRETHREN VERY DEARLY BELOVED,

"With emotions which I have not language to express, I read your communication of September 17th, and if I have been honoured in the least degree as the instrument of winning souls to the Saviour, or encouraging the weary pilgrim in his march to Zion, I hope you will unite with me in ascribing to sovereign mercy the undivided glory. Merely to become partaker of 'so great salvation' incurs a debt of gratitude which the services of eternity cannot cancel. But how much is this debt enhanced by the additional honour of becoming instrumental in bringing fellow-immortals to the participation of a boon so precious? With much more propriety than even the apostle I may exclaim, 'to me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I might preach to fellow-sinners the unsearchable riches of Christ.' It is free grace which imparts the ministerial endowment; it is grace which furnishes the organ to communicate this gift; it is grace which presents an opening for the profitable exercise of the ministry, and it is grace which ultimately gives efficacy to our administration on the souls either of sinners or of saints. Whether the labours performed by me have been in any degree useful among you, or to what extent, the day of final retribu-

tion will reveal; yet Salem, with the Church of which you are 'the spiritual overseers,' never rises to my recollection without many and most delightful associations, as the residence where blessings were poured into my cup not to be enumerated in time. Probably few ministers in the militant Church were ever favoured with more uninterrupted peace, or a larger share of comfort, than I enjoyed during my continuance among you, and, therefore, every expression of respect and attachment to me, breathed in your letter, is most cordially reciprocated on my part to you and yours, and to all the Church. Forty-four years have elapsed this month since the commencement of my imperfect services in Salem, and upon each retrospective survey of that long period I am truly lost in adoring wonder at the condescension and forbearance of my Master. How many duties have been omitted which might have been performed, and how much imperfection has attended those which I have attempted to discharge? How much might I have done for my own spiritual profit by abounding more in devotional exercises, in prayer, in reading the Scriptures, and devout contemplation of the Saviour's fulness? and how much might I have done for your edification by cultivating with greater diligence each ministerial gift, and preaching to you the Gospel with more simplicity, and

sincerity, and fervour; also by attention to the instruction of beloved youth 'in the things which involve their eternal peace?' Yet, notwithstanding innumerable omissions, their spiritual nurture was not altogether neglected; and entreat them, from me, 'to remember him,' although absent, who has dispensed to many of them the ordinance of holy baptism, and has 'spoken to them, from their infancy, the word of the Lord;' and let it be your prayer and mine that the incorruptible seed occasionally scattered among them in our family visitations and social conferences may be watered by the dews of divine grace, and in the Lord's good time spring up in their conversion and salvation.

"You are pleased to speak of my fidelity 'going in and out among you.' I had illustrious examples animating me to diligence in this work—my own venerable father, and the ever-to-be-revered Dr. Clark, my predecessors in the ministry; and you also, my beloved brethren, in your station, are also 'encompassed about with a cloud of witnesses,' with those holy men who preceded you in the capacity of ruling elders. I am fully persuaded that, for any measure of comfort or success which may have accompanied my ministry, I was greatly indebted to their prayers, and holy conversation, and diligence in visiting the flock. O, be entreated, then, by all the solici-

tude which you feel for your present respected pastor, and the edification of souls committed to his trust, to sustain him by frequency and fervour in the discharge of this duty; be helpers to him by your prayers and countenance, as Aaron and Hur were to Moses: this will be of incomparably greater importance to him than any fulsome adulation of his person, or extravagant eulogiums on his public administrations. I would therefore respectfully recommend that you, the eldership, set apart an hour every fortnight, or every week, if consistent with other avocations, for the purpose of uniting your supplications for the divine blessing on him and his labours in the congregation. Such arrangements might, perhaps, interfere with the prosecution of your secular occupations, but this temporal loss would be overbalanced a thousand fold by the reception of divine consolation in your own souls, and in the comfort and usefulness of 'him who is over you in the Lord.' Then he will appear among you, both in the week and on the Sabbath, *a burning and a shining light*, and *you and others will rejoice in his light.* Often recollect those venerable men who preceded you in the station of ruling elders: they founded that Church in the wilderness, and afterward fostered it with their prayers and untiring exertions, and to you, their successors in office, it is now committed. Cher-

ish by your prayers, by your diligence in 'going in and out among the people,' the sacred trust. *Your* fathers and mine, who once superintended that flock, are now singing together 'the song of Moses and of the Lamb'—I cannot entertain a doubt in relation to either of them—and if we are faithful to our Lord, we will soon meet them in that world where 'sorrow and sighing are done away;' where 'they who minister and they who are ministered unto' shall rejoice together, and 'God will be all in all.'

"I have already exceeded the limits prescribed for this letter, and perhaps have trespassed on your patience, but I cannot do justice to my own feelings without appropriating the language of Paul on a similar occasion: 'O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open to you, our heart is enlarged.' Finally, brethren, farewell; be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and that the God of love and peace may dwell in your hearts, and houses, and every family of that Church, which is still embalmed in my warmest affections, is the prayer of your former pastor and present unfeigned friend,

"ALEXANDER PROUDFIT.

To Thomas Collins, Isaac Getty, John M'Murray, Thomas Stevenson, John Beaty, James B. Stevenson, David B. Thompson.

"This letter, if you think proper, may be read to the congregation, with an earnest desire for an interest in your prayers and theirs."

The preceding correspondence affords a beautiful illustration of those words of the apostle, Heb., xiii.: 'remember them who have had the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God.' To be thus affectionately remembered at the close of a long period of faithful service, or when called to remove into some other part of the Lord's vineyard, is, however, by no means the lot of all the ministers of Christ. Not a few have gone down to the grave in sorrow, produced by the ingratitude of those to whom they had spoken the word of God; while in other cases, the remembrance of the good which they had been the instruments of accomplishing has been entirely obliterated by vexation at their removal to other spheres.

During the summer of 1839 there was a family reunion at Salem, in the pleasant old family mansion, which can never be forgotten by those who ever had the happiness of enjoying the hospitality of which, for so many years, it was the seat. The fact is thus noticed and improved by its venerable head:

"*Salem, August 2d*, 1839. After a long separation from each other, the different members

of my family are here—Mrs. P., my children, with the exception of one, and all my grand-children; and we are here crowned with every circumstance of comfort which this world can afford; they are all in the enjoyment of health. my dear grand-children are favoured with the various senses of the body in perfection, and with rational powers susceptible of improvement under the divine blessing. And now, Lord, as thou hast in much mercy endowed them with these external advantages, wilt thou not impart to them the more excellent gift, even the unction of the Holy Ghost? They have been all baptized with water—may they all be taught of thy Spirit, and honoured to be useful in their generation. Thou knowest, Lord, that the highest glory I ask in their behalf is that they may be instrumental in promoting thy glory in the generation in which their lot is cast; when my lips are sealed in the silence of the grave, may theirs be employed in celebrating thy praise, in vindicating thy cause, and in recommending to fellow-sinners the great salvation purchased by thy dear Son. I ask not for either of them the honour, or the wealth, or the pleasures of the present world, but oh! that each of them may be enabled to choose, with Mary, the good part which shall never be taken away, and to spend and be spent for thee. This I consider their most

incumbent duty, their highest glory; and I know, from long experience, that it is their greatest, their only happiness. O Lord, thou wilt have a seed to serve thee so long as the sun and moon endure, and is it too much to plead this honour in their behalf? Thy grace has given the promise, 'I will pour my blessing upon thy seed, and my Spirit upon thine offspring;' 'my Spirit, which is upon thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds' seed, from henceforth even forever.' And these promises I now plead, as they are yea and amen in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thou hast given thy Spirit to my forefathers during generations past; wilt thou not, also, in thine abundant mercy, give it to my dear offspring through generations which may follow me?

"I anticipated much pleasure in the prospect of having my children collected under the roof where I had spent about forty years of my pilgrimage, in the enjoyment of a measure of happiness rarely exceeded or equalled in this world of trial; and although my cup is now overflowing with blessings, yet I find a want, a vacuity in every earthly enjoyment. When will I learn to cease from the creature, and rejoice exclusively in the Creator? When will I learn, with the

same emotions, to appropriate the language of the prophet? 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I trust in him. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee. Thy favour, O Lord, is life, and thy loving-kindness is better than life.' Health, wealth, reputation, friends, and all things terrestrial, are streams which may soon be dried up, or cisterns which may suddenly be broken or imbittered; but in the fellowship of thy love and in the consolations of thy covenant there are joys substantial and satisfying—a portion large as our desires, and lasting as our duration—fulness of joy, and pleasures forever more."

Amid the din and bustle incident to a residence in such a city as New-York, and the distracting cares and outdoor labours of the new office into which Dr. Proudfit had entered, he still preserved those habits of meditation on Divine things, and that fondness for social prayer by which he had been distinguished while a rural pastor. We give one extract from the diary in confirmation of this statement, and also because it contains a notice of a kind of prayer-meeting, the value of which, it is feared, is but little understood by Christians.

"*New-York, November 6th,* 1839. Agreed with two Christian friends to spend this fore-

noon in the exercises of fasting, humiliation, and prayer,

"1st. In making confession of all our sins, and in exercising repentance and humiliation on account of them; these sins we acknowledge to be innumerable, both private and public, the omissions of duty, and the cold, formal discharge of it. Ps. xxxii., 5, 51.

"2d. In looking to a covenant God for the remission of all our trespasses, that in the riches of his grace he would pardon them through the merits of that Jesus in whom he can be just, and the justifier of those who believe in him; that for his sake all our transgressions, however multiplied or aggravated, may be forgiven, and not be visited upon us or ours in the infliction of judgments either temporal or spiritual. Micah, vii., 18, 19. Rom., iii., 24, 25.

"3d. In supplication that God would prosper his work in every part of the world, that he would send the means of salvation where they are not enjoyed, and follow them with his blessing where they have been already extended; that he would raise up other labourers for gathering in the harvest, and hasten on the period when, in every place, incense shall be offered, and a pure offering. Luke, xi., 9. Habk., iii., 2.

"4th. That he would undertake the management of all our interests, and especially of that

matter in which these two friends are more immediately concerned. Read over Philip., iv., 6; 1 Peter, v., 7; Luke, xii., 6, 7, and other portions of Scripture authorizing us to cast all our cares upon our heavenly Father; also read Hebrews, 1st chapter; Daniel, 9th, and other instances in which the Lord, in answer to special prayer, had interposed for his children, and wrought deliverance in their behalf.

"5th. In prayer that, wherein these friends in Christ may have erred in the matter referred to, the Lord may pardon; that, wherein others may have had a sinful instrumentality in injuring them, the Lord would grant repentance—Job, xlii., 10; and that the hand of God may be seen in the final issue of the affair, so that glory may result to him, and the faith of his children may be confirmed.

"6th. That the God of Providence would open doors of usefulness and comfort for these Christian friends, and that this afflictive dispensation may be overruled for their spiritual profit. 'The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of that wrath thou wilt restrain.' 'We know that all things shall work together for good to them that love him.'

"*Order to be observed in our social meeting for prayer with the friends formerly mentioned.*

"1st. Read a variety of verses which prom-

ise the Divine presence on such occasions. Ex., xx., 24. Matt., xviii., 26. Acts, xvi., 25.

"2d. To read over some scriptures which furnish a warrant for approaching God in the hour of affliction, as able and willing to give relief. Ps. ix., 9, 10; l., 15.

"3d. To read various promises which secure a happy issue to every dark dispensation, when, by faith and prayer, we look to the Lord for the sanctified use of it. Isai., xlix., 23. Lam., iii., 25, 26. Ps. xxxi., 15.

"4th. Read over passages in the Bible which show the absolute supremacy and dominion of God over all agents and elements. Ps. ciii., cxv., cxxxv.

"5th. Concluded with reading remarkable interpositions of Divine providence, as related by Flavel and others."

Besides the meeting referred to in the preceding extract, there was another, consisting of the members of a few Christian families in the immediate vicinity of his residence. It was small, unobtrusive, unknown, except to the few who were accustomed to attend; and often have we heard some friends speak of the delightful hours spent in that little praying circle, where all were acquainted and sympathized with each other. We would not underrate the value of the more formal assemblies for social devotion; they are

a most important means of holding back that tide of worldliness to whose inflowing the Church, in our large towns and cities, is peculiarly exposed. At the same time, we believe that unspeakable additional advantages would result to the Church if Christian neighbours would only act upon that precious promise of the Redeemer, "Whatsoever any two of you shall agree to ask, it shall be done of my Father who is in heaven." The success of a meeting for prayer is not dependant upon the largeness of the number present at it; yet how prevalent is the feeling among Christian congregations that, when the attendance at such meetings is greatly reduced, the meetings themselves might as well be abandoned. Such was not the sentiment of Dr. Proudfit: he often observed, when quoting the promise already mentioned, and which might be called one of his favourite passages, that the number stated in this divine encouragement to social prayer was the lowest possible.

While in the service of the Colonization Society, Dr. Proudfit was necessarily compelled to make frequent journeys to different and distant parts of the state. The following extracts of the diary are introduced, not merely to show with what diligence he laboured to maintain in all places a spiritual frame of mind, but also for the light they cast on the subject of Christian experience:

"*January* 18*th*, 1837. Have resolved to set apart this forenoon for fasting and special prayer,

"1st. That the Lord, in his mercy, would give me more of his Spirit, and prosper his work in my own soul, and thus render me more extensively useful in his Church and my generation. Ps. lxviii., 18, 19. Luke, xi., 9–13.

"2d. That he would communicate the Spirit, in his sanctifying influences, to many of the youth in our country, and particularly to those who have enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education, and prepare them to go forth as labourers for gathering in the harvest. Matt., ix., 37, 38.

"3d. That he would arrest the progress of error in his Church, and restore to her, in its purity, that faith which was once delivered to the saints.

"4th. That he would bless abundantly all those means which have been devised for sending the gospel among the nations, and hasten the glory of the millennial day.

"*New-York, February* 3*d*, 1839. Have been unusually distressed through the day with a heart deceitful, and prone to wander from that God who is worthy of my undivided affections; it is more uncontrollable a thousand fold than the winds of heaven or the waves of ocean; often have I aimed at fastening my attention on some

promise of the gospel, or some perfection of God, or some excellence of the Saviour, or some office of the Spirit, but instantaneously and irresistibly, some vain, worldly thought has darted in, and interrupted my spiritual peace. The good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do. Surely, with greater propriety, with deeper emotions of shame and sorrow than the prophet, I may exclaim, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' There is a mystery of iniquity remaining within me, which none but an omniscient God can explore; an abyss of depravity, which none but he can fathom or comprehend. I have been long in the school of Christianity; many golden opportunities I have enjoyed for receiving instruction; many resolutions I have formed for keeping my heart with greater diligence: but how slow has been my progress in the attainment of knowledge; how inconsiderable my advancement in holiness—in love to God, and devotion to his service. Truly I am a babe in Christ, less than the least of all saints—a most unprofitable labourer in his vineyard."

"*Oxford, Chenango county, September* 12*th*, 1839. Visited this village in behalf of the Colonization Society, and to-day have been much indisposed, but found a great degree of submis-

sion to the will of my heavenly Father; could say with filial resignation, Lord, not my will, but thine be done; was enabled to rejoice in Jehovah in all the infinite perfections of his nature; in his almighty power, which could raise me up from this bed with infinite ease; in his unchanging love, which is never alienated for a moment from the children whom his grace has adopted; in his unerring wisdom, which knows when to humble me, and when to exalt—in what manner to correct, and how long to continue the correction; in his mercy, which, with more than the tenderness of a father, sympathizes with his children in all their afflictions. Here I am alone, far from my dear family and friends, but enjoy most comfortable reflections on Jesus, my kinsman, who sits, in my nature and name, at the right hand of his Father and my Father, who knows my frame, a feeble, insignificant reptile of creation, less than an atom compared with those suns and worlds without number which he is now sustaining and governing. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for all that he has revealed of his attention to the circumstances of his people, and for all that I have experienced of his love and his faithfulness to his covenant."

"*Utica, September 29th*, 1839. After a journey to the West in the cause of colonization, reached this city last evening in health, although

threatened on the 12th with an attack of fever, and felt constrained to renew my expressions of gratitude for my innumerable mercies, especially for the visible interposition of the Divine arm in my restoration to health. Truly, Lord, thou hast not dealt with me after my sins, nor rewarded me according to my iniquities. When I take a view of my heart, deceitful above all things, and of my life, so unprofitably spent, my proneness to indulge a spirit of pride under every smile of Providence, and either to despond or murmur under every apparent frown, I am really overwhelmed with astonishment at the Divine forbearance. I can truly say that I believe there is not a being in the universe to whom a sovereign God has exercised such long-suffering; a being more distinguished by mercies, and yet more ungrateful and unprofitable in the enjoyment of them; none has more abundant cause *now*, or can have through eternity, to sing aloud of his forbearing, forgiving, supporting, and comforting mercy. But, O my Lord, the most acceptable sacrifices to thee are a broken spirit, a contrite heart thou wilt not despise; and this brokenness, this contrition of spirit I now offer thee, through Jesus the mediator. Accept of me as I am, accept of my body, and strengthen it for thy service; accept of my soul, and enlighten it to comprehend more fully the

mysteries of thy character, and Word, and Providence; may it be more purified in all its powers, and motives, and desires; accept of my duties, however imperfectly performed, and render them subservient to the advancement of thy cause.

"'Lord! I am thine, forever thine,
Nor shall my purpose move;
Thy hand hath loosed my bonds of pain,
And bound me with thy love.'"

"*Kingsborough, Montgomery county, November 22d,* 1841. Visited this village in behalf of the Colonization Society. On Sabbath morning felt great earnestness in prayer for the Divine presence in the sanctuary; afterward experienced much freedom in preaching from Psalm xvii., 15, 'I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness;' and have since understood that the discourse was refreshing to the souls of many. Oh, what a debtor I am to rich, sovereign, abounding grace! it is grace which gives the disposition to ask the blessing; it is grace which imparts strength of body and the exercise of the memory to recollect Divine truth, and it is grace which renders the message effectual, either to the sinner for his conversion, or to the saint for his consolation and support. On the evening of the Sabbath, attended a conference meeting, when we had satisfactory evidence of the Lord's presence, both in the exercises of con-

versation and prayer. I was disposed to exclaim secretly, with Peter on the mount, 'It is good to be here;' or with Jacob in the wilderness, 'This is no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.' If the service of God is so delightful amid all our imperfections, our blindness of mind, the coldness of our hearts, and wandering imagination, who can conceive the joys which will attend the services of the upper sanctuary, where we shall be equal to the angels—where, like them, we shall see without a cloud, and enjoy without interruption?

"'There we shall see his face,
And never, never sin,
And from the rivers of his grace
Drink endless pleasures in;'

and unless I am cherishing a false hope, this perfection of enjoyment must shortly be realized. I have advanced so far through the wilderness that I must soon, very soon, pass over Jordan, when I hope to reach the promised Canaan.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, that while so many much younger than I have gone to the land of silence, I am yet spared, and honoured with health and strength to speak and act for him."

"*New-Brunswick, December 19th*, 1841. Set apart some time this morning for prayer and meditation; reflected with unfeigned gratitude on all that goodness which had so eminently followed me during a long journey through this

wilderness, now filled with briers and thorns in consequence of sin; where there are, on the right hand and on the left, so many devious paths by which we are in danger of going astray, and where the devil, as a roaring lion, is ready to meet and destroy us at every step. Endeavoured to commit all my children to that forbearing and gracious God by whose tender mercies my own lot through life had been so distinguished. O Lord, are they not thine own offspring, created by thee, and for thy glory, and wilt thou not have compassion on the work of thine own hands? Were they not early devoted to thee in baptism, thine own ordinance? Have I not aimed, according to the wisdom given me, to bring them up in thy fear, and for thy service? Has it not been my supreme solicitude that they might all be partakers of thy mercy through Jesus Christ, and be employed in their several stations for promoting thy kingdom in the earth? and therefore I look this morning, in all humility, for the fulfilment of the promise. Daniel, xxx., 6. I also commend to thy blessing that enterprise in which I am still occupied for colonizing our people of colour on the coast of Africa, and sending through these colonies the treasures of our Divine religion to the benighted tribes of that continent. I now commit every colony, and each family in each colony, and

the missionaries of all denominations who are labouring among them, to the protection of the God of providence; may their lives and health, and all that interests them, be precious in thy sight; and oh! that more labourers may be speedily raised up for entering that and other regions where the fields are becoming white for the harvest."

Of the labours of Dr. Proudfit for the advancement of the cause of African colonization, it will not be necessary to say much; the nature of the work itself is too well known to need explanation, and the flourishing condition in which he left the particular institution with which he was connected is the best evidence of the success of his exertions. We are well aware of the great difference of opinion which obtains, and has existed for years past, respecting the merits of this institution. Not a few have denounced it in unmeasured terms as one of the greatest obstacles in the way of the emancipation of the American slave, and, at the same time, as a scheme that never had been nor could be productive of any real good to Africa. A full discussion of this subject would not at all comport with our main design in the preparation of this memoir; and it is the less necessary, inasmuch as the active opposition to the society has of late very much abated, though the feelings which prompted it

are by no means extinct. This much, however, ought to be said, that while Dr. Proudfit, in common with many of our most eminent philanthropists, looked upon the colonization scheme as a valuable one, since it opened to the American slave the door to immediate freedom, he, at the same time, regarded Africa as the great field of labour and of influence. In his judgment, it combined the double character of an emancipation and a missionary institution; the colonists were, with rare exceptions, emancipated slaves; and though it were vain for any one to expect that these colonists individually would all assume the character, or do the work of the Christian missionary, yet he did believe very strongly that the influence of the Liberian Colony is a most healthful one. Besides its influence upon the tribes in its immediate vicinity, it formed a basis of aggressive operations against both the slave trade and the paganism of Central Africa. Such were the views with which Dr. Proudfit engaged in the service of the Colonization Society; he looked upon himself as labouring for the benefit of the long-down-trodden children of Ham, for the promotion of a scheme which tended to diffuse throughout the African Continent the inestimable blessings of Christianity and civilization.

In 1841 he was desirous of retiring from

the office of secretary, and tendered his resignation to the committee, but, at their urgent request, he was induced to continue in the work until near the close of the succeeding year. The affairs of the society, by the Divine blessing upon his labours, had been placed upon a satisfactory footing, and he therefore sent to the committee the following letter, which is here introduced because it exhibits fully his views of the general subject, and the aspects in which he was accustomed to contemplate it:

"At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the New-York State Colonization Society, held at the Colonization Rooms, February 13th, 1841, the corresponding secretary having tendered his resignation, it was unanimously resolved that it be laid on the table, when a reply was presented by Dr. Reese, with a resolution that these documents be published under the direction of the committee. They are here subjoined:

"Colonization Rooms,
"New-York, January 28th, 1841.

"Respected Friend,

"Through you, as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the New-York State Colonization Society, I herewith tender my resignation as their corresponding secretary from the 10th of May ensuing, when the sixth year of my connex-

ion with the board will be completed. While I adopt this resolution to retire, I wish it to be distinctly understood that my confidence in the practicability and excellence of the scheme remains undiminished. I may rather assert that with each revolving year we have accumulating evidence of the magnitude of its results, both as they refer to our own coloured people, who compose the settlements on the coast of Africa, and also the interior tribes of that continent. It is well known that the custom of colonizing is nearly coeval with the history of the human race, and has been incorporated in some degree with the progress of society from the earliest ages of the world. In every period of time, as men began to multiply on the face of the earth, we have seen them associating in little groups, and migrating to other regions for the purpose of improving their condition, either temporal or spiritual. The city of Carthage, which became the rival of Rome, was founded by a little colony from Phœnicia, in the East. Athens, the birthplace of Demosthenes, and the distinguished nursery of literature and the sciences, was founded by an inconsiderable colony from Egypt, under the auspices of Cecrops as their leader; and this continent, where an asylum is opened for the oppressed of all nations, was settled by colonies coming in succession from the Old

World ; but in consulting the whole history of colonization during the lapse of ages, we cannot, in my opinion, point out an instance in which this enterprise incurred less expense, or experienced less disaster, or enjoyed more obviously and eminently the smiles of an approving Providence, than the project of colonizing, with their own consent, our people of colour on the soil of their ancestors ; and certainly in no instance can the object recommend itself more powerfully to the feelings of the philanthropist or the Christian. Whether it be regarded as involving the interests of humanity by meliorating the miseries of an injured portion of the divine offspring, or of religion by opening an 'immeasurable field' for the spread of the gospel, perhaps a scheme more interesting was never conceived in the bosom of man. Can we imagine a nobler design—one either more benevolent or magnificent, than the erection of these republics of coloured freemen on a distant, barbarous shore, with all the immunities of an American citizen? And by whom is this interesting enterprise carried on? Not by the powerful patronage of government, but by the munificence of individuals—individuals who, with a few exceptions, were never chargeable with holding a fellow-being in bondage ; thus, from motives of the purest sympathy, and by the sacrifice of much

money and time, they are elevating the man of colour from his present degradation, and restoring him to that position in the family of nations from which he has been torn unrelentingly to gratify the avarice or ambition of the unprincipled white man. But the plan which you are prosecuting appears still more interesting in the estimation of the Christian, when he contemplates these colonies as a medium through which the light of immortality and life is dawning on a continent with more than a hundred millions of immortal beings. In whatever light, therefore, we regard the enterprise in which you have embarked, it appears entitled to an honourable rank among those institutions which adorn this age of benevolent action; and I am fully persuaded that this group of Christian republics, composed of free people of colour, will remain a monument to the honour of American piety, and patriotism, and philanthropy, when those who first projected and who now patronise it have gone to give in the final account of their stewardship.

"But, however interesting I regard the plan, or however confident I feel of its ultimate triumph, I am constrained to resign my connexion with the society. I have now passed the limit prescribed as the ordinary period of human life, and therefore desire to spend the residue of my

days in a manner more retired, and with a more direct reference to that long eternity which cannot be far distant.

" Therefore, with grateful recollection of the prompt and cordial co-operation of you and your associates in the execution of every measure which promises to advance the common cause, and with fervent wishes for your success in its future prosecution, I bid you an affectionate farewell. Permit me to add, that I must be chargeable with inexcusable ingratitude, did I omit, on the present occasion, to express my obligations to many, very many in this city, and in every part of this state, and of other states which I have visited, for the generous support which they have given to our society. They appear sensible of the injuries which have been inflicted on the offspring of Ham by our own nation, and by others; and for the purpose of repairing these wrongs, they have contributed with a degree of liberality honourable to themselves, and the cause, and the country. Without the least hesitation, I may assert of some, as the apostle testifies to the honour of the Macedonian Church, ' that to their power, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing to communicate ;' and that, through the riches of Divine grace, we may all meet in that world where every ' labour of love' will receive its ample reward, and ' they who

sow and they who reap shall rejoice together, is the prayer of your friend and fellow-labourer in the cause of Africa's redemption,

"ALEXANDER PROUDFIT,

"*Cor. Sec'y. N. Y. State Coloniz. Society.*

"Anson G. Phelps, Esq."

To this letter the committee replied in the following terms:

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"The undersigned, members of the Executive Committee of the New-York State Colonization Society, having received and read your affectionate letter, containing the tender of your resignation as our Corresponding Secretary on and after the 10th of May ensuing, beg leave to respond thereto by presenting to your notice the considerations which, as they respectfully submit, should be influential with yourself in inducing you to reconsider your proposed resignation, and to consent to our unanimous wish by continuing in the service of the society and of the colonization cause.

"For nearly six years you have been most intimately associated with us in your official capacity, and by your indefatigable exertions, your prudent counsels, and successful appeals in behalf of our society, our holy and noble cause, so long the object of your affections and prayers,

has been greatly prospered and advanced; your name and character having thus become identified with colonization in our own and other states, the friends and patrons of the cause have continued to make you the chosen almoner of their bounty, and, in your retirement from the station you have so long and usefully filled, they would feel it to be a privation not to see you or hear from you as heretofore in the honoured work of Africa's redemption.

"Notwithstanding the good old age which you urge as the reason of your retirement, it has pleased a gracious Providence thus to prolong your days in the midst of 'labours more abundant,' and bestow upon you a degree of health and strength, at your advanced period of life, such as is allotted to few. Your friends may record of you as was written of Moses, the leader of the ancient colonization hosts, even beyond the age of threescore years and ten, 'your eye has not become dim, neither is your natural force abated.' Hence you have been enabled to conduct the affairs of the society with strict economy, and collect nearly eighty thousand dollars for the Colonization Society during the six years of your official service; and this, too, during a season of unparalleled commercial distress and financial embarrassment, by which every department of benevolence had been hinder-

ed and curtailed for lack of pecuniary means. Nor can we forget that the period of your labours in our service has included that in which our cause has suffered the most formidable and systematic opposition at home, and the most grievous disasters abroad which have ever occurred in the history of Liberia; but still the good hand of the Lord has been with you and with us, and through your instrumentality, under the Divine blessing, the State of New-York has, during the six years past, contributed a greater amount of money to the purposes of colonization than all the other free states of this entire confederacy.

"Under these circumstances, we, your brethren and fellow-labourers in the cause of Africa and her children, most affectionately and earnestly desire that you may withhold the communication of your resignation at the ensuing annual meeting, and that you will continue to sustain, as heretofore, the relation of our corresponding secretary, while a beneficent Providence shall still spare your useful life, and endow you with strength, as at present, to perform its arduous and important duties.

"Should increasing age and infirmity render it desirable at any time to provide you additional assistance in your office, the committee will promptly respond to your wishes in this respect;

but we cannot forbear to repeat our reluctance to lose your valuable services to our cause, and our ardent wishes that you may still find it consistent with your future arrangements to retain the office you hold, and favour us with your labours, your counsels, and your prayers. With sentiments of high regard and sincere Christian affection, we subscribe ourselves most respectfully your friends and brothers,

"Anson G. Phelps, Gabriel P. Disosway,
Thos. C. Doremus, David M. Reese,
Thos. De Witt, Moses Allen."
James M. Goold,

The last visit which Dr. Proudfit made to Washington county was in the autumn of 1842. On this occasion he spent a communion Sabbath in Argyle, a parish adjacent to that of Salem, and of which the Rev. George Mairs, one of Dr. Proudfit's oldest fellow-presbyters and friends, had been for many years the minister.* We

* Mr. Mairs was minister of Argyle for almost half a century. He died in 1841, and his character is well drawn in a sermon preached by Mr. Halley, of Salem, on the Sabbath succeeding his decease. Though his name was but little known in the theological world, it will long be precious in Argyle. The Book of Psalms was a special favourite of his, and few could equal him in practical edifying exposition of those divine songs. He excelled on communion occasions; one of his sacramental addresses was pronounced by Dr. J. M. Mason to be one of the finest specimens of eloquence to which he had ever listened. He was an Israelite, indeed, in whom was no guile

have been favoured with an interesting account of this visit by the present worthy minister of Argyle, the Rev. George Mairs, Jr., which we cannot do better than to give in his own words: "Dr. Proudfit's last visit to this place was rather providential; he came to Salem on his return from a journey to Western New-York, and there heard that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to be dispensed in our church on the following Sabbath. He at once concluded (as he subsequently informed me) to unite with us in that ordinance, supposing that it might be for the last time in this place, and just so it happened. He entered our church on Saturday (very unexpectedly to us all) during the time of service; at a proper time I requested him to engage in the concluding services of the day, dispense the tokens, and address intended communicants—duties which I would not have invited any other man on earth to perform so long as I enjoyed health. The doctor at once complied, and the kind, affectionate, and able manner in which he spoke to the members of the church will, I have no doubt, be long kept by them in lively remembrance. Our good people, indeed, felt that a spiritual father was before them, and every sentence that fell from his lips was listened to with the deepest attention, and, I trust, not without self-application. After returning home in the

evening, I informed the doctor, that although I was prepared for the duties of the Sabbath, yet I wished him to take whatever part of the services would be most agreeable to himself. His reply I shall always remember: 'feeling that it might be the last time on earth that he would be favoured with an opportunity of meeting with a people for whom he cherished the kindest feelings of regard, he would cheerfully comply with my request, and discharge all those duties which his bodily strength would warrant.'

"He preached the action sermon from Psalm xvii., 15, 'I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness;' he officiated at four of the table services, and made the concluding address. Throughout the whole day he was unusually animated and earnest; he has always been a great favourite in this congregation, but the services of this day raised him (if possible) still higher in their esteem. The excellence of the sermon is a subject of remark among our people until this day, and the concluding parting address was so seasonable, appropriate, and touching, that it drew forth floods of tears from the eyes of many of our fathers and mothers in Israel. It was *truly* the closing scene of his useful life in the midst of *this* people. The evening of the Sabbath he spent under my roof,

and I believe we all felt that our home was a Bethel. After repeatedly engaging in prayer, praise, and religious conversation, the doctor took our little ones by the hand one by one, and, in the most feeling manner, addressed himself to each by name, selecting, at the same time, subjects, and using language adapted to their capacity. He left us on the following day with our best wishes, and hoping again to meet him in the body, but a righteous God determined otherwise. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

The succeeding Sabbath was spent among the people of his former charge, and he thus expresses his feelings in view of its solemn services—the last which he was ever permitted to perform among them.

"*Salem, Saturday, November 5th*, 1842. I have the prospect of preaching to-morrow to this dear people, to whom I long sustained the relation of a spiritual overseer in the Lord, and upon a retrospective view of days which are past, how much do I recollect which may call forth the language of thanksgiving, and how much to humble me in my Master's presence! How little, comparatively, did I feel the awful responsibility of the trust! How rarely, in addressing them from the pulpit, did I realize as I ought that each hearer was an immortal being,

and must soon, very soon occupy either a mansion in heaven, with angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, where there is fulness of joy, or be tormented in hell without abatement or end! How often—to my shame be it acknowledged—have I preached my own insignificant self rather than Him whom the hosts of heaven admire, and who is the only hope of the perishing sinner—seeking their momentary applause rather than their soul's everlasting salvation! Thou wouldst have been just, insulted Saviour, in confounding me before them for such daring presumption; but, having obtained mercy, I faint not, and am yet honoured to appear as thine ambassador, and have the prospect of proclaiming to them once more thine own unsearchable riches. Wilt thou condescend, blessed Master, to aid me on the present occasion? Oh, for thy Spirit to shed light upon my understanding, which must otherwise remain dark, and with his influences to enliven and expand a heart contracted and cold! Oh, for the tongue of the learned, that I may speak a word in season to all who attend! Often, *often* have I felt thy power and seen thy glory within those sacred walls which I expect to enter on the ensuing Sabbath; often have I there experienced a degree of delight in proclaiming thy message which I have not language to express, and

which, during the lapse of eternal ages, cannot be forgotten. Thou art still the same; thy power is the same to support, thy fulness to replenish an empty earthen vessel; thy mercy is the same to pardon every imperfection; and thy faithfulness to accomplish every promise in me, and by me, and for me. In this I rejoice, that thou art the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

Soon after his return to New-York, Dr. Proudfit addressed the following letter to the friend with whom he had spent so pleasant and profitable a communion Sabbath, and which may be here introduced as forming an appropriate close to the account of his last visit to Washington county:

"New-York, November 25th, 1842.

"My dear Brother,

"I frequently recollect, with much pleasure, the season which I enjoyed with you during my recent visit to Argyle; and I trust that he who so long sustained your revered father, and honoured him to be eminently useful in winning souls to the Saviour, will continue his smiles to you, and honour you to be equally instrumental in the salvation of sinners. For the purpose of attaining such a measure of usefulness, let us cherish lively impressions of our own insufficiency, of our absolute insignificance and nothing-

ness, that Jesus may be all in all in our meditations, in our studying for the pulpit, and in the delivery of our discourses.

"It is the highest attainment, and, indeed, the only safety of the private Christian, and more especially of the public teacher, to sit at the feet of the Saviour, looking up to him for all that measure of life, light, strength, and joy which are requisite for those who have nothing, and can do nothing of themselves. But let us cherish the delightful persuasion that the Master whom we serve possesses all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and that he has 'received these gifts for men, even for the rebellious;' and that he is willing, infinitely willing to communicate all that is necessary for the comfortable, acceptable, and profitable discharge of duty. We cannot, my dear friend, either ask or expect too much from him, because he is *able* to do *in* us and *for* us 'exceeding abundantly beyond what we can ask' or conceive; and, glory to his name, he is not more able than willing. Let us therefore ask and receive, that our joy may be full.

"When I look back upon the exercise of my ministry during a period of nearly fifty years, I am really lost in the contemplation of his long-suffering and forbearance to me, and am truly ashamed at each reflection upon my ingratitude

to a benefactor so liberal, and a friend so ardent, so disinterested, so unceasing in his attention to my wants. Oh, how much has been left undone which I might and ought to have done, and what infinite imperfections have been mingled with the little which I attempted to perform; but I can only subscribe with the apostle to the honour of the long-suffering of this Master, 'as we have this ministry, having obtained mercy of the Lord, we faint not.' 2 Cor., iv., 1.

"Remember me affectionately to your family, to my relatives around you, to your session, and to the Church, with a request for an interest in their prayers; and that, in the exercises of meditation and prayer, and a lively faith, you may be kept near to that Jesus who is the fountain of all blessing, and enabled day after day to be deriving from his fulness all necessary grace, is the unfeigned wish of your own friend and your father's friend, A. PROUDFIT.

"Rev. George Mairs."

In retiring from the service of the Colonization Society, which he did a few weeks after the date of the above letter, it was not Dr. Proudfit's intention to retire from the field of active Christian exertion. There were two objects which he was very desirous to have accomplished. The one was the publication of a new edition of his works, principally for circulation

among the remote destitute settlements of our country; the other was the raising of an amount sufficient for the liquidation of the debt of the Theological Seminary at Newburgh, an institution for which he had done not a little, and which he was desirous to see placed upon a thoroughly secure foundation. From several of his letters, it also appears that, in connexion with these objects, it was his desire and purpose to spend a considerable portion of his time in visiting various literary institutions, a work of which he was very fond, and was always ready to perform ;* but the active labours of the venerable servant of the Lord were near their close at the time of his retiring from the service of the Colonization Society. Very soon after an affection of the eyes began to show itself, which confined him to the house during the greater part of the winter of 1842–3. The tenour of his meditations, while thus excluded from the performance of those active duties in which he so much delighted, will be learned by the following extracts from his diary. For such a season of solitude he had, in fact, been preparing himself by those habits of retiring from the world, which he had

* It may be mentioned that he was a trustee of Union College, of the Burr Seminary, Manchester, Vermont, and one of the Committee of Examination of the Poughkeepsie Collegiate School. Usually he made it a point to attend the examinations of all these seminaries.

cultivated for many years. Conscious that his course on earth was near its fulfilment, he looks back on all the way by which the Lord had led him with mingled thankfulness and humiliation; and he looks forward to that eternal world into which he was so soon to enter with the cheerful confidence of being accepted in the Beloved.

"*New-Brunswick, March* 12*th*, 1843. Have been confined to the house for some time with an inflamed eye, and about this time last year was laid aside for a while by an inflammation of the lungs. Thus is a sovereign God teaching me my entire dependance on his providence, sometimes by one dispensation and sometimes by another. When labouring under one infirmity, I am disposed to think that, if *it* were removed, my health and happiness would be complete. My Master is therefore, in wisdom and love, adding line upon line; thus teaching me, if my dull heart would but learn, that in no part of this feeble body am I invulnerable, that in him I live and breathe; but, amid these ever-varying dispensations, how much is there to produce not merely an implicit, but cheerful submission to his will; to sing not only of mercies, but of judgments. 1st. We have the positive assurance that these afflictions, with respect to the righteous, are the rod of a Father. 2d. However painful to the flesh, and though they may derange some

favourite plan, or prevent the immediate discharge of some duty that seems to us important, they are all sent in wisdom and love. 'As many as I love I rebuke: whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth.'

"'Behind a frowning providence,
He wears a smiling face.'

3d. We are assured that these afflictions, through the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, conduce to their real advantage. Indeed, the sanctification of the soul, at least our becoming mortified to the world, our crucifying the lusts of the flesh, appears to be principally carried on by means of bereavements, disappointments, or adversity in some form. The husbandman prunes the tree, that its fruit may be improved both in quantity and quality; the refiner's fire is applied to consume, not the gold, but the dross. Who of the saints cannot testify with David, from their own experience, 'it was good for me that I have been afflicted?' With respect to my own experience, although I was drawn at first with the cords of love, found an easy transition to the light, liberty, and consolations of the gospel, without suffering in any considerable degree the terrors of the law, yet I can now sing to the honour of abounding grace, and, I believe, will sing to eternity as loudly of judgments inflicted as of mercies imparted. My cup has indeed

overflowed with mercies, personal, domestic, social; yet I consider myself more indebted to crosses than to comforts for any little progress which I have made in humility, in patience, in mortification to the world and conformity to the Divine image. Every feature of a child of adoption which may be discerned in me by others, every shadow of resemblance to my Elder Brother in submission to the will of God or zeal for his honour, has been impressed by the rod, and, in some instances, by the rod severely applied. In June, 1791; in May, 1796; in June or July, 1802; and in October, 1808, there were memorable instances in which the Lord hedged up my way, preserving me, apparently, from utter ruin, by visible and almost miraculous interpositions of his hand by affliction. O Lord, in many other instances, but especially in these, in faithfulness thou didst afflict me."

"*March* 19*th*, 1843. I am still confined to the house by an inflammation of the eye, and am thus denied the privilege of being ministered unto by attending the public ordinances of religion, or of ministering to others by dispensing the Word of Life; but it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. The days and nights appear, indeed, to roll tediously along, but hope of deliverance in due time supports and enlivens. This dispensation is dark to me; yet I am assu-

red by the Word of God, the testimony of others, and my own experience during a long life, that the issue will be happy; that he will bring me to the light, and enable me to behold his face in righteousness. 'Learn, therefore, O my soul, to wait with patience upon thy covenant God, though clouds and darkness are round about him.'

"'Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his gracious will.'

"My warfare will soon be accomplished. Here there is alternate light and darkness, joy and sorrow, health and sickness; but in that world of glory, which is open to the eye of faith, all these vicissitudes shall terminate forever; the light of its blessed inhabitants will be unclouded, their joy unmingled, their health unimpaired; the Lord will remain their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended."

"*March 25th*, 1843. I have now advanced nearly four years beyond the prescribed period of human life. I am therefore forewarned by the purpose of God and the natural course of things, that I must shortly be called to leave time for eternity. How solemn is the prospect of retiring from a world which I have so long inhabited, and in which I have seen so much to excite my admiration of the power, wisdom, and

goodness of the Creator! How often have I been led to admire his bounty in the almost infinite variety of the productions of this world, some of them more substantial and necessary, others more delicate, designed, apparently, to gratify our taste! In the contemplation of this variety, often have I been led to exclaim with the Psalmist, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.'

"But in retiring from this world, where there is so much to awaken our admiration, the eye of faith can look forward to scenes still brighter and more glorious, to new heavens and a new earth; and if in this world there is so much to fill us with adoring thoughts of God, how magnificent beyond conception must heaven be, where he dwells in light, where Jesus sits effulgent in the midst of the throne; but how little do we know of the mode of our future existence; in what province of the divine dominions the New Jerusalem is established; what are the exercises and joys of the redeemed; in what manner are they admitted to fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; what is implied in seeing God face to face, and knowing even as we are known; in what way shall spirit commune with kindred spirit during the space which intervenes until the resurrection of the body; what are we to understand by bod-

ies, powerful, spiritual, incorruptible, glorious, which shall hunger no more nor thirst any more, capable of serving God night and day!

"Little as is now known of these things, in the ordinary course of nature they must soon, very soon be realized by me; and in taking a retrospective view of my journey through life, who of the human family is more indebted than myself to a forbearing, forgiving, beneficent God? Truly goodness and mercy have followed me so far in every step through the wilderness. I have been favoured with an exemption from torturing pain and loathsome disease, with a competency of temporal blessings, and an unusual measure of health to enjoy them. I have also been favoured with the affections of a large circle of friends, and with the confidence of a Church to which I ministered for more than forty years; and by offices of a more general nature I have had opportunities of extending my acquaintance with many thousands in various parts of our country, and of every Christian name, with whom I hope to be associated forever in the kingdom of our common Father; and although far advanced in years, I am scarcely sensible of the infirmities common to persons of my age. I enjoy the various senses of the body unimpaired, the exercise of memory, and of other powers of the mind.

"Amid favours thus multiplied, I have only to complain of myself, of my ingratitude for mercies innumerable; of opportunities lost, which might have been improved in doing good or receiving good; of indolence and insincerity in the service of my Master and of my generation; of the inconsiderable advancement in spiritual wisdom, in faith, love, and all the other graces of the divine life. For all these transgressions, for my omissions of duty required, for my commission of sins forbidden, I humble myself this moment before a holy God."

CHAPTER VII.

A FULL account of the closing days of the venerable subject of this memoir will be found in the following letter of his son, Dr. John Proudfit, of Rutger's College, with whom he spent the last winter of his life, and at whose house he died. This account is preceded by some recollections of Dr. Proudfit designed to exhibit certain phases of his character, especially his domestic character, which could be appreciated and properly described only by a member of his own family.

New-Brunswick, Sept. 20, 1845.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"You desire from me an account of the closing scene of my father's life, with such traits of his character, and such incidents and recollections as it is the peculiar office of an intimate and *domestic* intercourse to discover and preserve; and I hasten to comply with your request, briefly but earnestly expressing my gratitude to God and to you, my dear and honoured brother, for that love and appreciation of the beauty of a holy and useful life which has prompted you to the labour of diffusing and

perpetuating its influence in these memoirs. The task, naturally enough, devolved upon me, but Divine providence (in ways which it would serve no useful purpose to explain here) prevented me from performing it, with the design, I trust, that it should be better accomplished by yourself.

"I find no language to express the emotions awakened by the recurrence of my father's image to my mind: how lovely and venerable it seems,—how suffused in all tender and sacred hues,—how associated with, and, as it were, *imprinted upon* all that is great and beautiful in nature—the starry heavens, the green earth, the opening buds of spring, the general decay of autumn! I have often asked myself, what is the secret of this *life* which death has not been able to destroy, nor even impair; which, in truth, seems to possess an increased charm and power since it has been detached from all mortal relations; of this *society*, which death seems scarcely to have interrupted, so that he seems as truly *present* with me as when we walked and talked together here? And I have only been able to trace it to the predominance, in his character and intercourse with me, of that 'spiritual mind which is life'—a life untouched by physical death, and but slightly affected by the accidents of presence and absence. Everything now re-

minds me of him, because, from my earliest years, he made everything remind me of God. When he became an actual inhabitant of the invisible world, he seemed only to be more intimately associated with those great objects to which it had been his constant aim to lead the thoughts and affections of all around him.

"The degree in which he 'felt the powers of the world to come' was, I think, very remarkable. It must have struck any person who had even a brief intercourse with him, and has often been remarked to me since his death by those who had no more than a stage-coach or steamboat acquaintance with him, or had met him only in the social circle. Those Scriptural expressions might be used of him with perfect truth: 'he walked with God:'—He endured as *seeing* Him who is invisible. 'The things' of God's law were 'in his heart,' and he talked of them as he sat in his house and as he walked in the way—as he lay down and as he rose up.

"Yet I do not think his mode of introducing religious things was *intrusive* or forced. He was opposed to this in principle, and, I think, was singularly happy in escaping it in practice. The strength and activity of the spiritual life within him diffused a religious aspect over his whole character—an aspect which had at once the equability and the variety of perfect nature and

sincerity—the lights and the shades which make every aspect of nature pleasing and beautiful. The diffusion of the religious influence around him was in striking accordance with those emblems which make the light, the salt, and the leaven, the emblems of the progress of that 'kingdom of God' which is 'within us,' and 'cometh not with observation.'

"The main strength of his character seems to me to have lain in a constitutional ardour—an *ἀκάματον πῦρ*—belonging, indeed, to his natural temperament, but receiving an increased energy, as well as a holy direction, from an uncommon unction of the Spirit of God. Doubtless his true element was *action*. He did not perceive this at first. His early years, and the first ten, at least, of his ministerial life were devoted almost entirely to solitary study. He read the classics, and the early Christian writers, and the profound divines of the seventeenth century with great diligence, sleeping in an eastern room, in the line of a large window, looking directly towards the east, that he might be waked to his studies by the first rays of the sun, and seldom migrating from his library except to preach or perform some tour of pastoral or ministerial duty; and doubtless the years thus spent in study and devotional retirement served to supply a deeper and purer source for

the almost unceasing activity of his later years. But when his faculties had come fairly into contact with the modern spirit of Christian benevolence, they expanded into an activity which could never again be subjected to the compression and restraint necessary to *studious habits*. He read, it is true, a good deal, and wrote a great deal to the last, and the portion of time which he gave to secret devotion and meditation was, I should think, rather increased than diminished; but he was thenceforward a man of action rather than of study. His intercourse lay with men rather than with books; and the energy of his mind and of his affections was too much absorbed in the present and the future to admit of the tranquil contemplation of the past; at least he thought so. I am by no means certain that he did not overrate the incompatibleness of active and studious pursuits; but I am now speaking only of the fact and of his own impressions. His 'coëmptos undique nobiles libros' he used to survey and handle with an affection which had a touch of sadness in it, speaking of the delight he had found in them, of the profuseness with which he had willingly spent money for them, relating anecdotes of authors and editions, and expressing his regret at the incessant engagements of an active kind which had withdrawn him from his favourite studies.

Perhaps I should not say his *regret*. He evidently felt that the public and active labours in which he was principally engaged constituted his *vocation;* that in these he was to 'serve his generation by the will of God,' (a favourite expression with him). Still, he often cast a lingering look on the quiet and contemplative pursuits of his youth and early manhood, and sometimes said, after quoting a passage from a classic author, 'how I should delight to renew these studies!—' adding, 'but we are not here for mere enjoyment,' or something to that effect. His love of books was decidedly a trait. Some fine copies, which he purchased when a member of college, continued to be the objects of his affection to the last. 'I have often purchased a costly book,' he has repeatedly said to me, 'and have felt that a single idea which it suggested has fully repaid me.' The Greek Testament which he used in family worship—a noble 'Baskerville'—he used to look upon and handle with a peculiar affection, saying, that, 'if luxury was allowable in anything, it was in having fine copies of the Word of God. His fondness for that book has often brought to my mind Alexander's love for his Homer, and I have even carried the parallel farther, and thought that in his case the priceless volume of God's word was laid up in a nobler casket than that of Darius, even the

casket of a holy heart, chased with the pure gold of faith, and set with the gems of holy affections. I recollect the time when he used his Hebrew Bible also at family prayers; but this he did not long continue to do. Often, however, I have heard him say, 'I must sit down and renew my Hebrew studies:—' But to *sit down* for such a length of time as is necessary to master and familiarize an ancient language was not among the things which the plan of Providence in reference to him during the latter years of his life, permitted him to do. His Greek Testament he used for this purpose, if I recollect rightly, till he left Salem. His classical reading was too early interrupted to be very *extensive*. It had, however, been unusually thorough, and had produced one of its most valuable fruits, in at once strengthening and chastening his imagination, and perfecting his conception and appreciation of the beautiful. Horace, and the Georgics of Virgil, and the tenth Satire of Juvenal were his peculiar delight among the Roman writers. Of the first, he had learned large portions by heart, and often quoted his fine moral maxims, and alluded to the inimitable pictures of human life in his Satires to the last. The tranquil and cheerful Xenophon was his favourite among the Greeks. He appears to have read the early Christian writers with attention,

but as theologians he considered them feeble and superficial, and principally valuable as furnishing the materials of ecclesiastical history. His love of books and of retirement, together with his characteristic ardour and perseverance in whatever he undertook, would, I think, have led him to make great acquirements, had not his energies been early diverted into a different channel; but, active as he was, of late years, no man thought less of a mere bustling activity. His conviction was very strong, and often expressed, that a well-accomplished and 'thoroughly-furnished' minister of Christ must be a learned man, a student, a thinker—a man living much among books and well acquainted with them. He very often expressed his doubts whether the multiplied public services of ministers in the present day tended, after all, to the edification of the body of Christ; whether it would not be better if ministers were more in their studies, and private Christians more in their families and closets. He thought the *social* was often cultivated in religion to the neglect of the meditative, the spiritual, the devotional; that the style of preaching which prevailed formerly, when ministers were more decidedly studious men, was more solid, instructive, edifying, and 'able to convince the adversary;' and that the private Christians who grew up under

such ministrations were more intelligent, stable, and spiritually minded. He often warned his young friends in the ministry and candidates for the sacred office to beware how they allowed engagements, even of a benevolent kind, to interfere with those *studies* which are the proper work and duty of early life—admonishing them of the great importance of a well-disciplined and well-furnished mind, and of the difficulty of even *maintaining* studious habits after they should once get fairly into the vortex of this age of restless activity and unsparing demands on the time and resources of ministers.

"His love of souls was wonderful. In his more private supplications, he prayed for the salvation of men, of particular friends who were strangers to God, of 'thoughtless youth,' of the heathen, with an earnestness (I might perhaps say, without extravagance, with an agony of soul) which has reminded me of the awful and mysterious language of the apostle on this subject, such as, 'we are beside ourselves unto God,' and other similar expressions. The Word of God was 'a fire locked up in his bones'—a 'burden' which weighed heavily upon his soul. His convictions of the greatness of our fall from God, of the utter corruption and helplessness of men, and of the absolute necessity of sovereign and omnipotent Grace to 'open their eyes, and

to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,' were very deep and powerful. He often arose from his bed at night to pray for souls. He often stopped in his walks or rides, or arrested the course of conversation with a pious friend for this purpose. With what unutterable earnestness would he offer up that sublime petition of the prophet, 'come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live!' Yet his convictions of the duty of men to 'turn to God and do works meet for repentance,' to 'believe in the Lord Jesus Christ' and save themselves from this crooked and perverse generation, were equally strong and earnest. His ardent soul little disposed him to be a solver of theological knots, or a diver into the bottomless depths of metaphysical abstraction. He freely confessed that he was not fitted for it. He was 'a preacher of the Word.' What he 'received from the Lord's mouth,' that he 'declared' to men. For him a 'thus saith the Lord,' was sufficient. He embraced and presented the great truths which form the antipodes of theology with the same boldness and prominency in which they stand forth in the Scriptures of truth, without feeling it necessary to explore all 'the deep and secret things' that lay between them. In his preaching, the

glorious truth, that 'all things are of God,' shone out full-orbed; but he 'prayed' men to *be reconciled unto God* with a liberty and earnestness far from being impaired, but, on the contrary, clothed with peculiar energy and authority, by the close and living relation, in his mind and preaching, between the two great co-ordinate truths of God's sovereignty and man's obligation. No man ever heard him say or imply anything which looked like excusing unconverted men in *waiting for God* without turning to Him, forsaking their sins, and seeking his mercy through Christ. The style in which he charged the conscience was full of authority and power. His entreaties to sinners to 'flee from the wrath to come' and secure 'the great salvation' by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, were pathetic and importunate beyond almost anything that I have ever heard. I have often seen him, in his own pulpit at Salem, sit down, overpowered by his emotions, and weep for some time before he could proceed. Sometimes, on the point of dismissing the congregation, he addressed to them a few words of parting counsel and entreaty, and one of these shafts, discharged 'at a venture,' lodged in the heart of a careless hearer in the galleries, and was the means of 'saving a soul from death.' It is very possible that such instances of success induced him to repeat this

deviation oftener than was expedient; but his heart overflowed the regular channels of instruction and effort, and his maxim was, 'if *by all means* I may save some.'

"Even in sleep and in delirium his soul 'obeyed the helm' of its ruling principle. My mother has related to me that one night, during the early period of his ministry, she was awakened by the sound of his voice. She perceived him standing on the floor asleep, moving his arms with vehemence, and uttering earnest, though incoherent words. 'My dear,' said she, 'what are you doing?' 'I am telling them,' he replied, 'to work out their salvation with fear and trembling.'

"During the long fever which brought him nigh to death in 1842, he was often delirious. On one occasion, while his mind was wandering, he insisted that the doctor should be sent for. My mother replied, 'he has just been here and left his prescriptions, which we are following: he cannot do you any good just now.' 'Well,' said he, 'if he cannot do *me* any good, perhaps I can do *him* some.' At another time, when this gentleman was in attendance, he pressed him very closely and earnestly on the subject of personal religion, and added, 'now, doctor, if I die, and you neglect this counsel, I take you to witness this day that I am pure from your blood.'

nor would he be satisfied till the doctor had taken out his pocket-book and recorded the precise day and hour of the transaction.—One of his elders, an eminently pious man, had died and left a large family of sons, most of whom were very wild and thoughtless. One day, as my father lay in his darkened and silent room, he suddenly broke out into an exhortation, addressed to each of these youth by name, beginning with the eldest, and proceeding with great exactness and appropriateness to the youngest. He then turned to my mother, who sat by his bedside, and said, 'Who will carry this message to these youth?' She said there was no one whom she could then conveniently send. 'Well, then,' said he, 'you will have to carry it yourself; for it must be borne to them immediately.'—On one of these occasions, when he was exhausting himself by incessant speaking, my mother, unable to prevail on him otherwise to be silent, hinted to him that his mind was a little wandering. He was evidently surprised and hurt by the remark. 'My mind wandering? Well'—(after a moment's silence), 'if my mind wanders, Jesus Christ is the polar star!'

"A desire which had such complete possession of his soul must, of course, have impelled him to incessant efforts to compass its object. The dream of Lucian, in which he fancied him-

self borne aloft over the earth, and scattering everywhere, in his flight, seeds which bore the most beautiful and precious fruits, was, in a better sense, realized to him; for his whole life was a *dispersion* of the seed of God's saving truth. The casual word, the brief but earnest counsel, inserted even in his ordinary correspondence; the tracts which he wrote, published, and circulated himself many years before associations for that purpose were formed; his ardent and impressive sermons, many of which passed through six editions before his death; the earnestness with which he co-operated with every form of benevolent effort, and the large proportion of his income which always went to such objects; and, though last (in *his* estimation certainly not least), his labours for the planting and fostering of Christian colonies in Africa, put all his talents to occupation in a way that will, I doubt not, procure him the sentence of 'Well done!' when the great Master of the household shall 'come and reckon' with his servants. His efforts for the young were peculiarly earnest, and were eminently blessed. I doubt if there was a child in his congregation who was not brought directly under his personal influence. He often persuaded parents to give their sons a liberal education, where he observed in them superior intelligence, and thus many a highly-

endowed intellect was, by his means, rescued from oblivion and unfruitfulness. The number whom he educated himself, in whole or in part, was very surprising. One youth, bequeathed to his care by his dying father (though that father he had never seen), he carried through a complete course of liberal education at his own charges. The history of the academy at Salem is a striking proof how much may be done by a zealous and liberal clergyman, not only to *promote* education, but to *direct* it to its best and noblest ends. So long as he remained at Salem, he was president of its board of trustees, and he frequently visited the institution, invited the pupils to his house, procured funds for it from the state, and laboured in every way to extend its usefulness. Some, who were then among its pupils, have since been members of both houses of the Congress of the United States, not a few have been useful clergymen, and some have filled important stations in the judiciary of our country. But you have spoken of this, as well as of his zealous exertions for the cause of education, in connexion with Union College. I may, however, add an incident or two, to show the earnestness and success with which he laboured to make moral and religious impressions on young minds in the process of education. He was once entering a nephew at Union College.

It was at the time of commencement, and he was at the room of one of the graduates, making purchases of his furniture, or some arrangement of the kind, for his nephew. The young gentleman with whom he was making these arrangements was a fine scholar, and possessed high intellectual endowments, but was considered to be of skeptical sentiments. My father inquired if he had determined to what profession he should devote himself. 'I shall enter Judge W——'s office next week, sir,' was the prompt and somewhat *sharp* reply. My father, however, added a few counsels, suited to the critical moment when a youth is about to pass through the narrows, as it were, and enter on the great ocean of the world (a moment, the responsibilities and eventful consequences of which he always felt most deeply), and, leaving the youth his best wishes, departed. A few weeks after, he received a letter from this young man, stating that those parting words, however slightingly received at the moment, had fixed themselves deeply in his heart; that they had awakened his conscience, and turned his thoughts to the long-neglected subject of religion; that, instead of 'entering Judge W——'s office,' he had gone to the retirement of his mother's house, in the country, to reflect on the past and the future; that he had sought God in the solitude of the

forest; that He, who had been heretofore an 'unknown God' to him, had revealed Himself to his soul amid His own works, and through the study of His word and prayer; that every breeze seemed now to whisper to him His being and His presence, every flower to proclaim His power and love; that, in short, a wondrous and blessed change had come over his whole being, his views of nature, of God, and of himself—his plans for this life, and his expectations of another; that he had found pardon, peace, and joy in God through Christ, and now desired to proclaim to his fellow-men the grace which had redeemed him.* He added a request that he might be permitted to study for the ministry under my father's direction. The emotions which overwhelmed my father on reading this letter, can only be perfectly realized by those to whom God has given the unspeakable honour and happiness of 'turning a sinner unto righteousness.' He immediately wrote to the young man, inviting him to reside for a while in his family. He did so for a year, pursuing his theological studies under his direction, which he afterward completed (I believe) at one of the public seminaries. He is now a highly-respected clergyman of the Episcopal Church, and occupied for

* This eloquent letter was lent to a friend several years ago, and, to our great regret, has been lost.

many years a professorship in one of our Southern colleges.

"He observed, one day, a young man standing on the piazza of the hotel, whom he knew (though slightly acquainted with him) to be a pupil in the academy. He had his baggage at his side, as if prepared for a journey. My father asked him if he was going to leave the academy. He replied that he was; and, in answer to farther kind inquiries, frankly stated that straitened circumstances had been the cause of this determination. This young man had a high standing as a scholar, but had made no secret of his infidelity. My father requested him to send back his baggage, and resume his studies, and trust Providence. He did so, and he did not trust in vain. This incident led to a more intimate acquaintance between him and my father. He became a frequent visiter at his house. It pleased God to open his soul to the light and power of the truth. My father baptized him. He pursued his studies throughout, entered the ministry, and was, for several years, professor in a college. He has since resumed the pastoral relation.

"He had once appointed a pastoral visitation and lecture in a remote district of his congregation. The pious father in the Church, at whose house it was to be held, urged a youth in his

employment to attend, but he declined, pleading the soiled condition of his outer man, as he had been all day clearing and burning in the forest. The good man's urgency, however, prevailed. He attended, and the Word of God 'came to him with power and with the Holy Ghost.' He laid aside his axe and brush-hook, studied for and entered the ministry in his own (the Baptist) denomination, and became an uncommonly fervent and impressive preacher.

"His success in obtaining money for benevolent objects was very remarkable. The streams of liberality seemed to gush forth at his touch, where others reasoned and pleaded in vain. I have often wondered at his power in this respect; and as his success is well known, and as the whole enterprise of Christian benevolence in our times—the whole movement for the world's conversion—hinges (as far as the *material* is concerned) on the fidelity and success of ministers in this respect, I have thought it worth while to give utterance to some of the thoughts which have occurred to me as accounting for his remarkable success in this particular. He regarded this as a distinct and important branch of his duty as a minister of Christ. He felt the full weight of the apostolic command, '*charge* them that are rich in this world, *that they be not high-minded;* nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the

living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy—*that they do good, that they be rich in good works—ready to distribute, willing to communicate*—laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.' He therefore approached his opulent friends and relatives in this matter 'with authority, as a minister of Christ,' and with a mingled solemnity and tenderness, which was not often unsuccessful. I have seldom seen him so much dejected and distressed as when his efforts to open the heart and hand of a rich acquaintance had been unavailing, or attended with what he thought a disproportionate success, especially when he has spoken of it after the death of the individual; for he had an awful idea of the responsibility attached to the 'stewardship' of riches. The selfishness which could close the hand of a rich man against the claims of divine love or suffering humanity, seemed to him to argue an almost hopeless hardness of heart. On looking at a fine mansion, inhabited by one whose 'portion was in this world,' he has said to me, 'We may see how lightly God esteems riches, since he bestows them on such men.' He felt, and often said, that he was doing the greatest possible kindness to a rich man and to his children by persuading him to convert a portion of 'the mam-

mon of unrighteousness' into 'the *true riches*.' The freeness with which he gave of his own, also, was well known, and doubtless conduced to the success of his appeals to others. In truth, he spent sparingly, that he might give freely. Christian hospitality and charity, and 'charges to preach the gospel,' were by far his largest expenses. It was a constant maxim with him, that self-denial is the only source of a steady, as well as an abundant liberality; and he told me, near the close of his life, that, in travelling, he had often gone without his dinner, simply with a view of *saving, in order to give*. 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' was also a motive, the infinite power of which he well knew how to apply to the heart which was capable of gratitude for redeeming love. He used to say that, after a few moments of spiritual communion and prayer, the intended donation had often been doubled of the heart's own motion. When he pleaded for the Bible or the Colonization Society, he scarcely ever presented the claims of either charity directly from the pulpit, but 'preached the gospel,' relying on it as a talisman of unbounded power to open the hearts of men, and to awaken to its highest energy every holy motive and benevolent affection; and his wondrous success in obtaining contributions for both, especially when he la-

boured (as he did with his whole heart and soul) for the glorious object of giving a Bible to every household in the United States, sufficiently proved that this was the 'more excellent way.' He always regarded his labours in behalf of these Christian charities as doubly blessed and rewarded, by having brought him into intimate intercourse with so many of the people of God. The acquaintance thus formed proved, in many cases, the commencement of a Christian correspondence and friendship, which terminated (or, rather, was briefly interrupted) only by his death. A single *instance* only of his success in this work I shall mention, because it was connected with an apparently slight, though, viewed in its important consequences, a very remarkable interposition of Providence. He was on his way to the meeting of the American Board at Boston, in 1827, and had proceeded as far as Manchester, in Vermont, intending to pursue his journey the same night, and had actually taken his passage for that purpose; but he was compelled, by the indisposition of my mother, who accompanied him, to remain in Manchester over the night. He inquired, after tea, 'as his custom was,' if there was any religious meeting that evening. The landlord told him there was, and accompanied him to it. On entering the house, he was recognised, and requested to con-

duct the exercises, which he did. His attention was somehow attracted, during the service, to a gentleman present, whose name he afterward inquired. The landlord told him it was Mr. Burr (well known as an extensive manufacturer of that place), and introduced him. Mr. Burr (who was not at that time a professor of religion) accompanied my father to the hotel, and spent the remainder of the evening with him. My father laid before him the work and claims of the American Board, and Mr. Burr gave him a donation of a hundred dollars for it. After separating from this gentleman, his situation dwelt much upon his mind. He was somewhat advanced in life, in a feeble state of health, without children, and the possessor of a large estate, as were also the other members of his family. My father, after his return home, addressed a letter to him, setting forth the great good he might accomplish by a wise and Christian disposition of the large bounty of Providence intrusted to him. Mr. Burr replied in a manner which showed that he deeply felt the truth and importance of the suggestions. A farther correspondence on the subject, I believe, followed. Mr. Burr died shortly after, and left nearly a hundred thousand dollars to the different Christian enterprises of the day. Among other large bequests, he founded that excellent and useful

institution which bears his name, the Burr Seminary, at Manchester. My father always thought that the hand of God was singularly visible in this matter.

"You have doubtless spoken fully of the methods and results of his labours as a pastor; but let me add one thing. What appeared to me most remarkable about his ministerial success was its uniformity and constancy. The spiritual harvests which he was permitted to gather in were not only plentiful, but regular. His success resembled the sure, though gentle growth of nature, rather than the rank and exhausting vegetation forced by artificial means. The minds of those who were under his pastoral care were from childhood unweariedly indoctrinated in divine things by scriptural and catechetical instruction. Family religion, and parental instruction and exhortation, were earnestly enforced. The good seed thus regularly sown, after all the *wastage* 'among thorns' and 'on stony ground,' as regularly presented itself in the blade and the ear, and the full corn in the ear. The early and the latter rain came down in their season on the heritage of God, under his husbandry. There was no communion, I believe, during the forty-three years of his labours at Salem, without more or less accession to the Church. He was blessed, also, with sev-

eral revivals of religion; and their fruits were permanent—as much so, he thought, as those of any other period of his ministry. Nor was the peace of the congregation disturbed by the fermentations which too often follow seasons of religious excitement: a happy effect, doubtless, of early and thorough religious instruction.

"The strength and fervour of the devotional habit was, perhaps, the most remarkable feature of his character. 'Praying in the spirit,' 'praying always,' 'praying everywhere,' and the like scriptural expressions, were literally and daily verified in him. The readiness with which his soul ascended to God, in whatsoever place or attitude he was, has often brought to my mind the practice of holy men of old: David *sat before the Lord*, and prayed;—Hezekiah *turned his face to the wall*, and prayed;—the publican *stood*, and prayed;—Paul and his companions *kneeled down on the shore*, and prayed. Often, while we were sitting and conversing together, he would lay his hand on my arm, and then lifting it up, without any change of posture, breathe out a few short and fervent petitions. After returning from a walk, on re-entering the room he would push to the door, and pray in the same attitude in which we were then standing. In the midst of society, he was often *alone with God*, as the heavenly expression of his countenance,

and his involuntarily uplifted hand and eye (how familiar to all who knew him!) indicated. He often spoke of the importance of yielding to the spirit of prayer at the very moment when His influence was felt upon the soul. In his journeys, during my early years, I was generally his companion. The Greek Testament (Leusden's pocket edition, with the Latin text at the foot) lay on the seat of the gig, and the cheerful current of ordinary talk was often interrupted by the direction, 'Take up the Testament. Let us have something more profitable. O! how few of our words are given to God! How much of our life runs to waste!' His conversation was remarkably cheerful, and even facetious, but his soul longed for God, followed hard after him, and could not endure a long tarrying amid worldly associations. A natural scene of uncommon beauty would often call forth rapturous expressions of thanksgiving, of delight in God, and aspirations after him. Mr. Beaty, one of his excellent elders, related to me the following characteristic anecdote after his death: 'I once took your father in my sleigh to fulfil a distant engagement to preach. On our way back, we passed through a beautiful pine grove, which threw a deep shade over the road. After we had entered it, your father told my son, who was driving, to stop, and all who were in the sleigh to take off their hats.

and *offered up a short, pathetic prayer.* O! I shall never forget that scene in the pine grove!' —His admiration and exquisite enjoyment of nature seemed to form a part, and to furnish a constant and substantial aliment of the devotional spirit within him; being often expressed in the form of adoration and thanksgiving, and sometimes in the language of scripture. Often, while walking on the back piazza of his house, which commands a distant view of the glorious range of Vermont mountains, which, with their infinitely varied, now bolder and now gentler undulations, subsiding at last into the lovely valley of Salem, form a perspective of unsurpassed beauty and grandeur, he would speak of Him 'which, by His strength, setteth fast the mountains, being girded with power; by whose bounty the pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered over with corn, and the little hills rejoice on every side.' I have thought, my dear friend, in reading the Cosmos of Humboldt (a world without a God, I fear), that if, in addition to the other 'sources of enjoyment in the contemplation of nature' which he has enumerated, he had mentioned an 'adoring and thankful spirit,' he would have pointed to a far deeper, as well as purer source of happy and elevating emotions than any which he has indicated. Durham's Astro-Theology, and Ray's Wisdom of

God in the Creation, and Sturm's Reflections, were favourite works with my father, from their tendency to exhibit an ever-present and everywhere-working Creator in the marvellous processes of nature. With the admirable works which our own age has produced on this subject, those, for example, of Sharon Turner, and of the authors of the Bridgewater Treatises, he had not, I believe, much acquaintance; the others he loved as his early guides through nature to God, and as having contributed to the formation of a *habit* to which he owed so much of the enjoyment of life, and of the power of religion in his soul, that of 'meeting God,'* and communing with him in the rejoicing contemplation of his works.—He would often, while sitting at table, take up a piece of fruit, and speak of the wisdom displayed in its structure, the tough coating which enclosed its juices, the hard and impervious cells in which the seeds were deposited, the slender stem, just sufficient to support it till it had attained its full growth and maturity, and then dropping it to the ground. —Thomson's Seasons, which certainly imbody some of the most sublime emotions of the adoring soul, he valued highly, and often recommended to the young. His noble Hymn to the Deity he knew almost by heart, and often ended a

* Isai., lxiv., 5.

descant on the wonderful works of God by repeating, with great fervour, the lines,

> 'but I lose
> Myself in Him, in Light ineffable.
> Come, then, expressive Silence! muse His praise.'

"When he had any special enterprise in hand, the earnestness with which he spread it out before the Lord, and endeavoured to 'lay hold on the strength' of an omnipotent Helper, appears from many passages in his diary. But when he took hold of the work of African colonization (which he did not till after much and anxious deliberation and prayer), this spirit was peculiarly manifested. The twilight hours, and often a large part of the evening, appeared to be specially devoted to meditation and prayer on this subject. To his view (and probably owing, in part, to its being thus revolved and associated) it assumed the grandeur and solemnity of a Christian and a missionary enterprise. It was bathed in the spirit of prayer, and prosecuted with an ardour with which he never engaged in any work which was not animated by the *love of souls*. He firmly believed it to be the best and most proximate mode *as yet* within our reach of labouring for the liberty of the African race, and for retrieving the grievous wrongs and woes of her enslavement; but this view of it would never have drawn out his energies and affections

to the extent in which they were actually enlisted in it; would never have constrained him to spend so many years of his life (and that, too, at a period when he was becoming more and more indisposed to everything merely *secular* or *political*, and more and more intent and concentrated upon that which was properly *spiritual*), in labouring for its advancement. It is remarkable that, at this period of his life, he became more and more absorbed in the work of African colonization; more and more confident of its sublime results, which, he thought, would far exceed the anticipations of its most sanguine friends; more and more earnest in his endeavours to fix it deep and firm in the confidence of the churches. He thought that the planting of Christian colonies in Africa, and thus bringing before the view of, and in actual contact with her native population, communities enjoying the blessings of Christianity, law, and civilization, would prove incomparably the most effective, and powerful, and rapidly-working instrumentality for spreading the light and influence of the gospel through the Continent. He looked upon the work as part of a grand Providential scheme, of which the enslavement and exile of the sons of Africa had been the beginning, and of which their restoration, converted, enlightened, and bearing with them 'the unsearchable riches of

Christ,' and the subsequent conversion of the native tribes, would be the completion. He could easily bear that others should differ from him in their judgment of this matter, and with some who thus differed he continued in the most friendly relations; but the conduct of those who fiercely denounced the scheme, and the motives of those who originated and carry it forward, he came to look upon as sheer wickedness or madness. The misunderstandings and suspicions of our English brethren in relation to the work, with the plain facts of its history, and the spectacle of its actual success before them, and the testimony of some of the most estimable officers of their own navy and ours to the high moral and social condition of the colony, puzzled him extremely; but he at length gave up all hope of their co-operation with us, and thought that it was our duty to go forward with the work and the appliances which God had specially confided to us. The sentiments in regard to colonization which I have stated above, abound in his correspondence and addresses on the subject; but I have here given the *impressions* left on my mind by his more familiar conversations. It was in the view which I have here presented that it enlisted his whole heart, and had some of his last thoughts and prayers.

I have seldom known a character so entirely formed, animated, and moulded by the influence of religion. To the self-education of philosophy (which some have, perhaps successfully, blended with Christian precepts and influences) he owed little; to the inward life and divine power of the gospel, everything. His life was truly a *life of faith*. His virtues were the 'fruits of the Spirit,' the spontaneous growth of those Christian principles and influences in which the very roots and fibres of his nature were imbedded, rather than the results of any exact discipline. His temper was naturally quick 'as the spark from smitten steel,' and, to some extent, continued so to the last. It was *sweetened* by Christian charity rather than *subdued* by habitual self-command. Its subsidence was as sudden as its excitation, and it was succeeded by the overflowing kindness of a forgiving and a loving heart. 'A shrewd turn' from any person seemed to render him doubly willing to submit to self-denial and effort to do good to the author of it.—He was in no respect a man of system. His warm and quick impulses prompted him rather to leave than to follow a much-beaten track. I know that he disliked an enforced exactness and uniformity, even in good things, and, in some instances, where good men have generally observed them: for example, in the disposi-

tion of his income; in times and attitudes of devotion, &c. I once asked him if he had laid down rules for himself in a certain respect; he answered, 'I never did; *I like to be free.*' Christianity, as developed in him, was 'a law of liberty,' a 'law of the Spirit of life,' and it was evidently his aim rather to strengthen and exalt the *life* than to multiply the specifications of the *law.* His goodness was one of sanctified feeling and Christian principle rather than of *system.* I have no wish to present this peculiarity for the imitation of others; but, as every manifestation of the spiritual life is interesting, I simply state the fact. Every individual Christian must, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, determine (in matters of mere method) what is best suited to his own character and circumstances.

"His laborious tours to preach the gospel among the early settlers of the North and West appear from your memoir; but the rich source of grateful and pleasing recollections which these voluntary labours furnished to his later years is worthy of being mentioned, as an encouragement to 'abound always in the work of the Lord.' I verily believe that the simple *retrospect* of these tours was more than a compensation for all the toil and self-denial to which they subjected him:—how he slept on a bed of pine boughs, and got up repeatedly in the night

to rest himself; how he was compelled to get off his horse in the night, in one of the vast forests of the West, and, on his hands and knees, *to feel for the road* which he had lost; how, when he and his companion had provided themselves with an ample store of good tea for their journey, the landlady, at one of their earliest lodging-places, turned in the whole stock at one *infusion;* how he was so tortured with the moschetoes, that he got up at night and drew on his riding-boots, determined to protect at least so much of his person from their attacks; the dinner of potatoes and salt at 'the cottage with the blanket door,' where he had to pull and husk the corn to feed his own horse, and yet found, in the contentment and joy of a pious and deeply experienced soul, *how little is enough* with the grace of God:—these were among the *adventures* which he used to relate. He often spoke, too, of the delight with which he used to look upon the 'human face divine,' when, at long intervals, he met any one, even though a poor Indian, in the solitary forests through which the road lay; that sometimes he rode a whole day and found but one abode, and that a log hut; and that, where the beautiful city of Utica now stands, there was, at his first visit to that region, only a solitary *shanty.* He has told me that he was at one time so exhausted, and his system so deran-

ged by scanty and bad food, that he could scarcely endure the sight of food ; and that one night, on the shores of Lake Ontario, he rose from his bed at midnight, and walked down to the shore, and sat upon the sand, *never expecting to see his home again.* One of my earliest recollections is that of seeing him mounting his horse, along with his valiant friend and 'companion in the gospel,' the Rev. John Dunlap, for one of his Northern tours, my mother weeping by his side, and looking after them till they vanished over the hill which forms the northern limit of the view from our house ; and any one who knew how exquisitely he loved his family and enjoyed his home can realize how much he must have been 'pressed in spirit' to have subjected himself to such a sacrifice. But the eagerness with which the people of those sparse and distant settlements listened to the Word of Life, the joy with which they welcomed him, the tears with which they often entreated him to stay with them, if it were but one Sabbath more, saying 'that his people could easily spare him for one week, but that it would be long before *they* would look on a preacher of the gospel again—' these things sustained and repaid him. He used to say that those who were accustomed to the coldly decent attendance of congregations, who heard 'the voices of the prophets every Sabbath

day,' could not realize the emotion often manifested by those whose appetite had been quickened by a long 'famine of the Word of God.' In one of his Northern tours, when he travelled in a sleigh, he visited a settlement in which there were but two families, who were distant from each other. He went to one of the houses, took the whole family into his sleigh, and carried them to the other, where he preached, 'and there was not a dry eye in the house.' In one of these Northern excursions he took a severe cold, which fastened deeply on his lungs, and he thought it impossible he could survive the dreadful severity of the weather. He used to speak of one memorable night, when, in this situation, he lay on a hard bed, with insufficient covering, 'shivering with the intense cold, unable to sleep, and thinking on the sovereignty of God, who had so differently dispensed his gifts to the children of men.' From that journey he returned with a deeply-seated cough, which did not leave him for several months. He used to speak of these things with admiration for the supporting and restoring goodness of God, when, past threescore years and ten, in a hale and cheerful old age, he had outlived almost all his early companions, which was the more remarkable, as his health had been so frail in the early years of his ministry that he was repeatedly thought to be

in a consumption. There have certainly been some remarkable instances in which Christ has sustained, and even restored his servants, in the midst of labours and exposures which were, apparently, quite beyond their natural strength. They 'who have *hazarded* their lives for the Lord Jesus,' have not always *forfeited* them. They have sometimes been, to all appearance, prolonged beyond the limit which they would naturally have reached.

"There was one incident of his tours in the distant West which seems worthy of being preserved. He had heard of the illness of an aged Indian chief at some distance, and, procuring an interpreter, he went to visit (what proved to be) his death-bed. While he spoke to him of the freeness and fulness of the salvation of Jesus, the old man 'laid his hand on his heart, and, lifting up his eyes, gave thanks to the great Spirit, who had sent him to speak to him of the Saviour.' He often alluded to this as one of the most affecting death-scenes he had ever witnessed.

"In no respect was his piety more lovely than in its domestic manifestations. Morning and evening prayers were indeed a 'perpetual sacrifice.' Sometimes the family were assembled for a few moments after dinner for reading the scriptures, singing, and prayer, but not always.

'We must take care not to make the service of our God a weariness,' was a frequent remark with him. The morning and evening devotions were begun with singing—he was displeased if any voice was silent in this act of thanksgiving; a portion of scripture was then read, which was done in course, each one reading a verse in turn, an occasional remark or anecdote being thrown in, suited to illustrate and impress upon the heart and conscience the truth of God. Sometimes his extemporaneous services in public were prolonged to an extent which he himself regretted—for he equally disapproved it in others and in himself—but his prayers in the family were *always short.* Here all were made to feel their equality; the humblest member of 'the church in the house' being called upon to read and repeat hymns and portions of scripture in turn. I have heard him speak strongly of the pain he felt when, in the house of a pious friend in the South, he saw the servants *standing* during family prayers. He 'watched over the souls' intrusted to him in his domestic as well as pastoral relation, and his fidelity in this respect was often blessed. A youth who was in service in his family for two years, and was uncommonly profane and hardened, and showed no signs of religious impression, wrote to him, twenty years after, from one of the new settle-

ments to which he had migrated, saying that the *remembrance* of the instructions, which had made so little impression at the time, had been the means of awakening and bringing him to God when far distant from religious privileges; that he had joined the Church, had for many years been enabled to walk with the people of God, and was now an elder of the church in the place where he resided. This man was afterward very useful in distributing books and tracts for him.—Many were his expedients to store the mind with the Word of God. Large portions of it were committed to memory, and sometimes, after a chapter or a psalm had been read, all were called upon, with closed books, to repeat what they could remember of what had been read: an invaluable exercise, for the readiness which it tends to form in the recollection and citation of scripture. The family repasts were varied and made instructive by questions on history and other useful and entertaining subjects, where emulation awakened the youthful mind and pleasure opened it to instruction. How slowly and reluctantly often was that family breakfast-party broken up! On the Sabbath, these questions were directed to scriptural facts, especially to the resurrection of our Lord, and often to the early history of the Church. 'What did the primitive Christians call the Sab-

bath?' 'Regina dierum' (the queen of days). This question and answer were repeated often enough to *throne* in our thoughts 'the blessed and hallowed day' in majesty and supremacy over all other days. The *manner*, too, in which it was observed by the early Christians was the frequent subject of question. After church, we were allowed to walk out with our books under the shade of the trees, and sweetly did the evening hours often glide away in conversations about the lives, works, persecutions, and deaths of good men. The Nonconformists' Memorial* sometimes furnished the starting-point for these conversations, or a sermon or portion of a commentary read, led, by an easy digression, to speak of the way in which the holy author lived and died. His aim certainly was to maintain a *strict* observance of the Lord's day, yet to divest it, as far as possible, of everything like severity and weariness; to throw over it a mingled air of *sanctity* and *cheerfulness:* and I think he succeeded to a surprising degree. I find, at least, this complex idea of the Sabbath as a day of *repose*, of *joy*, of *heavenly contemplation*, indelibly imprinted on my own mind, and I feel that I owe it to early associations. He encour-

* Merle d'Aubigné's admirable History of the Reformation, M'Crie's of the Reformations in Italy and Spain, and Hetherington's of the Scottish Church, would open a wide range, and suggest innumerable topics for such conversations.

aged all his children to learn music, instrumental as well as vocal, on the principle that it added to the delights and attractions of home, which he used to represent as, next to divine grace, the greatest safeguard of virtue. At our domestic concerts, gay as well as grave, he was a delighted attendant, and 'pleasing, yet mournful to the soul' is the memory of them! His parental discipline, though it included the scriptural and indispensable element of *severity* (for he was too much of a *literalist* to depart from so plain a teaching of the Word of God), yet, on the whole, was mild and indulgent, possibly to an extreme; and yet, I am sure, the thought of wounding that kind and noble heart was, of all earthly influences, the strongest to withhold his children from wrong.—It is at the instance of a highly-respected friend that I have attempted, though too feebly executed, this 'domestic portraiture.' Would to God that I could paint to the life the pure joys and happy memories that cluster about a *Christian home*—that spot to which, in the midst of this bleak and thorny world, some of the fruits and flowers of our native Paradise seem to have been transplanted. Lovely to the eye of memory is that sweet and sheltered mansion, 'bosomed high in tufted trees,' the light struggling and quivering through the leaves of elms, locusts, and evergreens; the

'bow-window' of the eastern parlour looking out on a 'fresh, smooth-shaven lawn,' terminated by a row of venerable elms on the grounds of Colonel Williams; his own study, directly over it, commanding, in addition to this, a part-view of the 'shadowy mountains' of Vermont; the very air of the place—the 'genius loci'—seeming to conduce to peace and contemplation. There Christian hospitality spread its banquet and gave its welcome; there, many a weary servant of God rested on his way, for his name and calling were always a sufficient introduction. Many a 'stricken deer' sought shelter beneath those shades; many a heart, broken by adversity, was healed there by the balm of hospitable kindness and Christian consolation; many a frame, shattered by missionary or pastoral labour, was recruited there. I have seen at one time a whole missionary family enjoying its cheer on their way to the Indians of the West, and, at another, Commodore M'Donough with his officers, after the brilliant victory of Lake Champlain. The honour of 'entertaining angels,' in the guise of God's humble people, he used to look upon and speak of as one of the greatest that could be put upon a Christian mansion, and to this congenial circle, his hospitality, which was at first general and indiscriminate, was more and more restricted. 'Peace was

upon that house,' for 'the Son of Peace' was there. And if there be a spot on earth which presents a picture of heaven, it is the abode in which the bounty of providence is thus consecrated and thus enjoyed.

"His warm love of country, and the deep interest which he took in public events, is a trait which I do not feel at liberty to pass over in silence, especially as the opinion is sometimes expressed that the duties of a Christian minister are incompatible with those of a citizen, or, at least, furnish in some sort an exemption from them. He held no such opinion, but, on the contrary, maintained that the deposite of his vote was at once *a right* of which nothing could deprive him, and a *duty* from which nothing could exonerate him. He had a high idea of the duty of an intelligent, calm, and *conscientious* exercise of the right of suffrage by every Christian citizen; and I have known him (then an old man) very patiently and firmly to wait and make his way to the polls amid the turbulent scenes which sometimes occurred in the city of New-York in 1835–8, now happily, and we hope forever, done away by the improved arrangements for the election. He was, in his opinions and spirit, thoroughly an *American* and a *Republican*, and had great confidence in the well-working and lasting of our political system. I recollect an amusing instance of the excitation

of this patriotic spirit. He was waiting, with a friend, at the hotel in Whitehall, for the arrival of General ——, with whom they were to have an interview on some business. Two English travellers were present in the public room of the hotel, belonging, doubtless, to that class who at once disgrace their own country and calumniate ours, and are equally the enemies of both. General —— at length drove up to the door, in a very light and unpretending undress, for the weather was excessively hot. '*That*,' said one of the travellers, 'is an American *general!*' My father quietly observed that 'we were too near to Lake Champlain to speak slightingly of American officers.' One of the most stirring recollections of his early years was the having witnessed, when a member of Columbia College, the inauguration of General Washington as President of the United States, and the grave and commanding aspect and bearing of the Father of his Country. He delighted to pay a marked respect to the surviving officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary War, and I shall never forget the manner in which he introduced the venerable and excellent Major Popham* to a circle of friends at Saratoga: 'I feel that we owe the most profound respect and the deepest gratitude

* Now ninety-three years old; the only surviver of the staff and the family of Washington, to whom he was *aid-de-camp*.

to those brave and venerable men by whom our country's liberties were achieved, and to whom, under God, we are indebted for the great blessings we enjoy as American freemen.' The major replied with characteristic courtesy, and expressed his deep sense of the obligations of our country to religion and its ministers.—He often dwelt on the marvellous care of divine providence as manifested from first to last in our national history, by which a handful of weeping, praying exiles on the rock of Plymouth had spread out into 'a nation, great, mighty, and populous.' As a natural consequence of thus contemplating national affairs and prospects from the watchtower of faith, *he always hoped well for the Republic.* The reason which he gave for doing so was characteristic. At a time when the state of political parties portended great danger, a friend remarked to him that we seemed to be on the brink of a precipice. 'Well,' he replied, 'it seemed so fifty years ago, and has often since, but God has somehow always interposed; *and as long as Christians in this land are labouring and pouring out their wealth for the spread of the gospel through the world, I have no idea that God will forsake us as a nation.* If we take care of his cause, he will take care of our liberties.' He often expressed the same anticipation in relation

to England. May God fulfil it in behalf of both nations, and cherish in the very heart of both the true conservative spirit—the spirit of Christian faith and benevolence!

"His *estimate of afflictions* was that of a mind accustomed to comprehensive views of the plan of divine providence, and judging of all things under 'the powers of the world to come.' 'I have never met with a single instance of adversity which I have not afterward seen to be for my good.' 'I have never heard a Christian on his death-bed complaining of his afflictions.' These remarks he made near the close of his life. Once, on hearing it stated that an eminent minister of the gospel, who had been visited with severe afflictions, had of late preached oftener and more eloquently than for many years before, he smiled, and said to this effect, 'I have no doubt of it. Oh how blessed is sanctified affliction!' He used to speak of a young and highly intellectual and accomplished friend, who was manifestly on the path to ruin, and for whom 'prayer was made to God continually' by pious friends, for a long time apparently without success. God at length arrested him, and brought him to the feet of Christ by a disease which prostrated his frame, broke the pride of his intellect, and rooted out his sensual passions, though it entailed on him a life of almost inces-

sant suffering. He cited this as an instance of the sovereignty of God's methods in 'fulfilling the desire of them that fear him;' the 'terrible things in righteousness' by which he 'answers' them. Newton's admirable hymn,

'I asked the Lord that I might grow,' &c.,

he greatly admired as a *history* of the spiritual progress of every believer, exemplifying the same truth. He often spoke of the *dryness* and formality of our prayers while in an outwardly comfortable and prosperous state, compared with the energy with which the suffering soul pleads with God, and *pours itself out before him.* —'Whether God smiles or smites, it is always in love.'—It is incredible what calmness and strength this habit of considering all things as 'of God,' and of viewing the present and future life of man as one continuous scene, gave him in 'suffering afflictions,' of which, notwithstanding the seeming prosperity of his lot, he had some which were peculiarly keen and bitter, as well as long-continued. It became, I may say, a part of his theory of the spiritual life, that every soul which God intends to sanctify and deliver from worldly influences must pass through a *period* of severe and varied trial. He thought that this period in his own life lasted for something more than ten years.

"I have often thought, my dear friend, that

pious cheerfulness and joy in old age are like the flowers that bloom late in autumn; peculiarly warm, rich, and cheering in contrast with the bleak and wintry condition of nature around; breathing at once of the spring that is past, and of the yet more glorious spring that is to come. I verily believe that my father's last two years were the happiest of his life; so calm was he; so confiding in God, in his promises, in *himself;* so delighting in the least thing in nature, every flower that he plucked, every scene that he looked upon; so happy in his friends; so full of good-will, kindness, and *hope* towards all men. His thoughts of the *love* of God seemed peculiarly to expand towards the close of his life. Of the great themes of the gospel, his mind seemed more and more to dwell on the glorious revelation, 'God is love.' He was sometimes deeply affected in speaking of the love of God, and of his great purposes towards man redeemed and restored in Christ. Even the manifold provision made for his happiness here; the 'kind illusions of the wondering sense,' which render this world, fallen as it is, so magnificent and well-furnished an abode for an intellectual and imaginative creature, he spoke of with much emotion; but with greater still of those breakings forth of far higher designs and *glories* yet *to be revealed* in the gospel. I remember his speaking to me on

this subject, *the love of God, and the future manifestations of it towards his human offspring*, while we were walking together in the country a few months before his death, in such a way that the spot, the attitude, the expression of his countenance at that moment will never pass away from my memory.

"It seemed to me remarkable, too, that, as he approached the close of life, his worship was more and more offered in the form of *praise*. When he proposed a hymn, it was almost daily one of these:

'From all that dwell below the skies!'

or,

'Behold the glories of the Lamb!'
'Before his Father's throne!'

or,

'Behold the saints beloved of God!'

or something that, in a like strain, celebrates the glories of Christ, the joys of the heavenly state, or the certainty and greatness of the Redeemer's triumph in the world.

"But I must hasten to the closing scene. He often expressed, in his latter years, the wish that his work and his life might end together. He loved life, it is true, with that peculiar strength and tenacity which characterize all active and sanguine temperaments, and sometimes said, 'well, the day of our departure cannot be far

off; but, for my part, I am not in haste for mine. It is pleasant to stay and see the progress of the kingdom of Christ,' &c., &c. Yet the fear of surviving to a state of imbecility of mind and body was observed to disquiet him occasionally during the last two or three years of his life. He was noticed to be unusually dejected after seeing an old friend who had fallen into this state (so as to be scarcely able to recognise him), and several times anxiously inquired whether we observed any failure in his mental powers. It is said that Arnaud committed all the Psalms of David to memory, in order to furnish himself with the materials of meditation after the power of acquisition should be lost; Beza could repeat all the Psalms in Hebrew after he was eighty years old; and it is undoubtedly true that divine and spiritual thoughts and truths do live and flourish in the mind after the general desolation of its powers and loss of its acquirements;* whether it be that their relation to the soul is more intimate, and therefore more enduring, or that they belong to the future rather than the past, and so remain with us after our hold upon the past is lost. Be the cause as it may, they are a sort of *mental evergreens*, and 'still bring forth fruit in old age.'—My father relied much

* A beautiful instance of this occurs in the account of the last hours of the excellent Bishop Wilson, by his chaplain.

on the *recollection* of scripture during his latter days, and said to an intimate friend, within the year before his death, 'I am committing hymns *to strengthen my memory*.' One morning, which he spent in a rail-car (as he afterward told my wife), he employed in recollecting and revolving the whole of the Assembly's Catechism, whose lucid and comprehensive definitions of Divine truths he always greatly admired.—It pleased God to 'grant him the desire of his heart,' which I have mentioned above. He was never permitted to know the 'labour and sorrow' of an infirm old age. While he was busily engaged in his work, his sun was, unperceived, going down, and, just as his task was finished, his eternal rest began. He sank, like a worn-out veteran in his full armour, on a well-fought battle-field, and 'death was swallowed up in victory!'

"It had been his fixed intention to spend the closing years of his life at liberty from public and official engagements. This he thought an old man's privilege; and he used to say 'it was better to withdraw a little too soon, than to wait till all but ourselves were convinced that it was time.' The retirement he contemplated was not one of inaction. 'Preparation for that eternity on which he must shortly expect to enter' was, indeed, to occupy much of it. But he ho-

ped to render such general services to the Church of Christ as his age should permit and providence direct to. To revise and republish some of his works—to visit extensively the churches of his own denomination—to promote the interests of its Theological Seminary, and to advance the cause of colonization, were, I know, distinct objects which he had in view. He resigned the office of Corresponding Secretary of the Colonization Society in the winter of 1841–2. The solicitations of many friends induced him, however, to postpone this step for one year, but he consummated it in the following winter. He was then undetermined whether to return and spend the remainder of his days in his own house at Salem, which had been unoccupied (except by a part of the family during the summer months) since he had left it, or to reside with us at New-Brunswick. How many of our doubts are solved by time and providence! Another mansion was in preparation for him; other services than those which he had contemplated awaited him.

"Near the end of the winter of 1843 he was confined to the house, and almost entirely to his room, by an inflammation of the eyes. An unusual sadness seemed to oppress him. Though the rooms were darkened, to enable him to share the family repasts, he did not often join us, and

could seldom be detained in the family circle after eight o'clock in the evening. 'Come, take a book and read to me; I am tired of meditating,' he would sometimes say, after passing a long time in silent thought, to the unceasing companion of his darkened room, whose love had 'ministered to him' through all hours and changes for nearly fifty years. Meditation, prayer, and hearing the Scriptures and books of a devotional character read to him, occupied these solitary hours. They seemed a providential preparation for the scenes which were so soon to follow.

"He recovered, however, and enjoyed for a week or two an unusually fine state of health and spirits. He had, as you remember, agreed to assist you in gathering in the fruits of a revival with which you were then blessed, and had gone as far as New-York on his way to fulfil this engagement, with the intention of going up the river the next day. In the evening, in coming out of a heated committee-room (of the Young Men's Bible Society, I think) into the cold air, he took a severe cold. He awoke in the night, and said, 'I feel very strangely. I will not attempt to go to Newburgh.' I arrived in town, as providence ordered it, early in the morning. As soon as he saw me, he said, 'I will go home with you to-day. I am very un-

well.' On our way over he seldom spoke, but said, once or twice, 'how unexpected! yesterday I was perfectly well.' When we arrived at my house, he took my arm (a support he seldom accepted), and went up, very feebly, to his own room, to leave it no more till his departure to another world.

"I know, my dear friend, how much the impressiveness of 'dying thoughts' is increased by the sad concomitants of the scene, the broken voice, the deathlike countenance, the slow and solemn emphasis. Still, *the very words* of a dying man are generally deeply interesting as well as instructive; and I add such of my father's as I noted down at the time, which I soon began to do, for the rapid progress of his disease (a catarrhal fever) speedily made it manifest that 'his days drew near that he should die.'

"Soon after he was taken, after lying for some time in thought, he exclaimed, 'grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord! I have preached his truth and grace, and now it is my comfort. The Lord can easily scatter this cloud. He can bring me back from the mouth of the grave. If it be his will, I should be glad to have a few months more—I do not ask years—just to set my house in order (a desire which he again expressed in nearly the same form); but he knows

infinitely well what is best. I have little entanglement with this world.'

"I remarked that, sooner or later, our earthly house of this tabernacle must come down to make way for our house which is from heaven. He interrupted me before I had finished the remark, saying, 'yes! and who would live always?'

"'Who would live always away from his God?'

(and finished that beautiful verse from one of his favourite hymns); 'but,' he immediately added, 'when we come to lie on a dying bed, it is the simple Word of God which must support the soul, and not these flashes of poetry. Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God; believe also in me' (and several of the following verses from John, xiv.).

"Once, after lying for some time silent, he exclaimed, 'let Israel rejoice in Him that made him! Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King! Rejoice in the Lord always; and again, I say, rejoice!'

"Early on Saturday morning (April 16), when I inquired how he was, he replied, 'O! I am going the way of all flesh as fast as—' Presently he took my hand in both his, and then laid his hand on my head, and said, 'you have been anxious that my life might be spared, but look at the condition of —— and ——' (two old and

intimate friends, whose old age had passed into a second childhood). I repeated the words, 'Abba! Father! all things are possible with Thee!' 'Yes,' he added, 'but I cannot ask absolutely. I am persuaded that a sudden removal is more desirable than to linger on through many years of old age. I am afraid to ask for the continuance of life.'

"Still earlier in the morning, before I came into the room, he said to my mother and sister, 'could not you give me something to strengthen me, and enable me to speak more distinctly? even if it should hurt me afterward, I wouldn't mind that, for it will soon be over. I don't expect to survive. I have given up all expectation of that, whatever. My warfare is nearly accomplished—my time is at hand.'

"To one of his little grandsons (R. R. P.) he said, 'I am going to die, but God will live!'

"When my mother was moistening his hands, he said, 'O how sweet! how attentive to every want!' I remarked, that it was hardly possible to conceive of a state where we should meet and associate with each other in perfect health, and youth, and joy; and if the offices of Christian love were so delightful here, what will they be there? 'Yes!' he added, 'and if we cultivate them now, we shall possess them then. They that sow to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'

"Again, after silence for some time, he broke out, with a deep and solemn energy, which was very remarkable, into these exclamations, 'How dark! how dark are the dispensations of providence! When his intention is our prosperity and happiness, he lays the axe at the root of everything which seems calculated to produce the fruit,' and more to the same effect.

"'No human being has had more cause to sing of mercy—mercy. I have put some thoughts on this subject on scraps of paper, which I intended to have finished' (or to that effect); 'you will find them among my papers.'

"I asked him if he had any message to leave to my brothers, in the event of his departure before they arrived. He said, 'Leave all with God—all with God! Let us not speak of anything earthly.' I inquired if he retained his confidence in colonization. He said, 'entirely—as one of the noblest causes.—It has everything to recommend it—as the cause of humanity, of religion, of Africa. Why should they be banished from their homes, and outcasts from the family of nations? But,' he added, 'let us not speak of anything earthly. God be merciful to me a sinner! is my cry.'

"Once he lay some time silent, and then exclaimed, with great fervour, 'what magnificent designs!'

"In the midst of severe pains, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.'

"Again, in a broken voice, 'O! entreat your dear brothers and sister—no time to be lost—all—all—friends to Christ!'

"'I never knew a Christian on his death-bed to complain of his trials.'—'A few moments of suffering, and an eternity of enjoyment!'

"'All the sufferings of the believer are not hell, but they are all the hell he shall ever suffer!'

"He awoke from a short sleep, just as the last Sabbath morning of his life was dawning, and exclaimed, with a strength and clearness of tone which surprised those around him,

'No mortal care shall seize my breast.'

"That morning we thought him better. His skin was softer, his respiration easier, and his utterance more distinct; but Dr. Van Deursen,* who was with him about half past six, was not much impressed by these favourable symptoms, as the pulse continued equally rapid. About 8 o'clock, he requested that we would all unite around his bed in 'a short prayer, that, if it were

* A tribute of filial gratitude is due to the more than professional assiduity with which this gentleman, accompanied by the venerable Dr. Charles Smith as consulting physician, attended his last hours.

the Lord's will, he would grant him a speedy deliverance.' We then knelt around him, and offered up our thanksgiving to the Father of spirits that he had created, regenerated, adopted, and sanctified the soul of his servant; that he had preserved it through all the various discipline of this mortal life, and made it ripe for glory. We commended it to him who had loved it, and washed it in his own blood. We could not ask that our dear father should be taken from us, and we could not ask that he should be detained in the midst of suffering; but we prayed that, when the hour came, he might be mercifully released without a long struggle.

"A little while after, he said, 'we are to pray without ceasing. Offer up a short prayer that the Lord would grant me a speedy release from this—lingering—conflict!' Again: 'The Lord, if it be his holy will, give me a speedy deliverance from this body of sin—of sin and death.' His utterance was very indistinct, but his uplifted eye and hand showed that he was in prayer, and we could occasionally hear such exclamations as the following, very slowly uttered, and much interrupted: 'Blessed Jesus!—dear Saviour!—support me!' Once, as we ceased praying, he said, 'Amen! the Father heareth always.' 'Pray that the Lord would shorten these days of affliction:

'These lively hopes we owe
To Jesus' dying love;
We would adore his grace below,
And sing his power above.'

"Once, after being silent for some time, he said, 'O grace—grace—grace! Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord!'

"He laid his hand on the head of each of his little grandsons, R. R. P., A. P. I., and A. P., and gave them his blessing, and expressed his desire (in what words I do not remember) that they might be followers of Christ. He told my youngest son (four years old) to repeat the words, 'suffer little children,' &c., which he did, and then he spoke to him of the happiness he would have *if he came to Christ.* 'Grandpa,' said the child, 'are you going to die?' His mother tried to check the question, but he received it with great sweetness and gentleness, 'that will be just as—' the rest we could not hear.

"He was thrown into a kind of rapture, and we were all exceedingly melted, when one of us repeated the words, 'they shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat; but the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'

"He spoke with great fervour of our infinite debt of gratitude for the love of Jesus. 'But for him,' he said, 'we must have suffered with apostate angels to all eternity the fruits of our apostacy.'

"Dr. Janeway spent a few minutes at his bedside on this (Sabbath) afternoon. When he inquired how he was, he replied, 'as I must expect to be in this body of sin and death.' When he asked, 'do you find the Saviour near to you?' he said, 'yes. I do not feel that warmth of love, that fervency of affection as before, but I rely fixedly on the Lord Jesus Christ.'

"Mr. Phelps (Anson G.) called to see him in the evening. When he bade him farewell, 'farewell,' said my father; 'let us live near to Christ, and then all will be well, eternally well.' His interview with this highly-valued friend was very affecting, but the conversation is not remembered.

"Towards night his sufferings from obstructed respiration became very great. He had often expressed the desire that he might depart on the Sabbath, and we thought he would not survive the day. He lingered, however, through the night, though, as we thought, in great suffering. When we asked him, however, if he suffered much, he nodded his head, and said, 'a little.' But he often cried, 'when will this lin-

gering conflict end? O for a speedy and easy transition! O for deliverance from this corruptible body—this body of sin and death! Come, blessed Jesus, dear Saviour, come! come! I long to depart.'

"Feeling much exhausted and unwell, I went to bed about eleven o'clock. Between four and five I was awakened by my mother's almost distracted cries in my room, 'O pray, pray for your dear father! He is suffering dreadfully. O that I could see him released!' When I went into his room, he said, 'just unite in a short prayer that the will of the Lord may be done.'

"Sometimes, when his lips were moving, we could distinguish these and the like expressions, 'blessed Jesus!—dear Saviour!—O for that triumphant flight!—I long to depart!'

"'Precious in the sight of the Lord,' said I, 'is the death of his saints.' He immediately added, 'O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant.'

"'Did you speak, dear father?' 'Yes—but—'

"We repeated to him, at short intervals, the following and similar passages: 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.' 'In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that

loved us.' 'Though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day; for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' 'Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.' When these words were repeated to him, his beaming eye and uplifted hand, and the inarticulate moving of his lips, showed how precious a cordial to his soul was the word of life.

"Once, after his articulation was much broken, he said something which we could not understand. He repeated the words again and again, and raised himself in the bed, showing, by his countenance and manner, the utmost anxiety that we should catch his words. At length we understood him to say, 'Isaiah, fifty-ninth—twenty-first.' When we repeated these words, and asked him if we were right, he nodded his head with an expression of great satisfaction and joy, and sank back upon his pillow. In behalf of all his posterity (for whose eye this is especially recorded), most solemnly and fervently we would say, Amen! Remember, O Lord, thy word, on which thou didst cause thy dying servant to hope!

"He had, many years before, intimated his desire that he might take his long rest 'by the side of his revered father.' Once, in the course

of his illness, he began to say something to my mother on this subject, but she interrupted him, telling him 'that it was quite needless; that she knew all his wishes; that he should be buried from no other place than his own home at Salem, and rest in the very spot he desired.' At this assurance a smile of unspeakable rest and delight came over his features, and he alluded to the subject no more.

"A remarkable proof of self-possession occurred but a short time before his death. He attempted, with much effort and difficulty, to say something to me, which I at length understood to remind me that the carriage must be sent to meet my (youngest) brother, who was expected to arrive by the cars of that morning; so accurate was his recollection of *time;* so strong, even in death, his parental love!*

"It is delightful to recall the love which was so intensely diffused around that dying scene, and expressed, not only by his words, but by his countenance, the glance of his eye, the pressure of his hands, which were placed on the head or

* This fact might be added to the very ingenious and striking argument by which Sharon Turner asserts the immortality of the soul, from the manifestation of identity and individuality in every idea and expression to the last moment of life. See his interesting statement and illustration of this doctrine, with a great variety of examples, in the second volume of his Sacred History of the Creation, Letter 27.

around the neck, now of one, now of another of the weeping circle around him, while, with his dying voice, he directed us to that Saviour who, through his earthly pilgrimage, had 'redeemed him from all evil,' and who (to use one of his latest expressions, pronounced with great solemnity and energy) was 'his all in all.' While the expressions, 'dear husband!' 'dear father!' resounded around his dying bed, he said, 'say, rather, dear Saviour!'

"He was in perfect possession of his faculties to the last, as far as we could judge by the questions we addressed to him occasionally, till we saw that he was in the last struggle—if it could be called a struggle; for his breathing ceased gradually and easily, and without painful effort. About half an hour before his death, I said, 'my dear father, is the Lord Jesus present with you?' 'Yes!' 'Are you afraid to die?' 'No!' Signifying both by the movement of his head, as articulation had become extremely difficult and painful.

"He expired about half past nine o'clock, on the morning of April 17th, 1843.

"As soon as he had ceased to breathe, we joined in a solemn act of adoration and thanksgiving to Him who had preserved him through all the temptations and sorrows of this mortal life; had supported him in the last conflict, and

given him (we doubted not) an abundant entrance into His everlasting kingdom.

"It was wonderful, my dear friend, how completely the sting and bitterness of death had passed away; its terror at the moment, its gloom in the retrospect. The shades of evening were soon gathering around us; but not so (we remembered) in the world which he had entered; 'there shall be no night there.' When we sat down to the family repast, we were reminded, by his vacant place at the table, that he was now one of that happy company who 'shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.' The first buds of spring were just opening around us; the season, of all others, in which his cheerful spirit delighted; and a feeling of sorrow was expressed by one of our number that he was not here to enjoy it. But where was he? In that 'land of pure delight,'

> 'Where everlasting spring abides,
> And never-withering flowers.'

O, divine Redeemer! thou hast conquered death!

"In the night following there was a terrific thunder-storm. The bursts of thunder and flashes of lightning, in the dead of night, and at that unusual season, were very awful. He had always shown a sensitiveness, not unmingled with terror, at these displays of the 'terrible majesty' of

God ; but now, when I entered the chamber of death (the windows of which were open), how deep its repose ! how solemn its stillness ! How 'great and terrible' that day when 'the trump of God' shall break even this deep sleep ! when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth !

" The next morning his remains were removed to New-York, on the way to Salem. A funeral service was performed in the afternoon at the house of my brother-in-law, Richard Irvin, Esq. A large assemblage of his old friends were present. The undertaker, however, having examined the remains, pronounced it improper to open them. A very impressive address was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Knox, prayer was offered up by the Rev. Dr. Spring, and the benediction pronounced by the Rev. Mr. M'Laren.

" The remaining circumstances of the removal and interment are related in the following letter, which I addressed to my mother from Salem on the morning after the funeral. If some of these details should appear unsuited to meet the public eye, I shall, I hope, stand excused, by the conviction that they will not be uninteresting to his friends, and still more by the strong desire I feel that the whole scene may thus be presented to the eye of his own descendants ; 'that the generation to come might know

them—even the children which should be born —that they might set their hope in God.'*

"Salem, Saturday morning, April 22d, 1843.

"Join with us, dear mother, in acknowledging the goodness of our heavenly Father, which has been signally manifested to us in our journey, and in every circumstance relating to the solemn rites which we came to perform. An accident on board the Rochester about midnight obliged us to pass to another steamboat between West Point and Poughkeepsie; but as Captain Houghton very kindly offered us a separate boat, the transfer was made without any painful circumstance. This, however, as the exchange of boats was made from one to two o'clock in the morning, reminded us of the goodness of God in ordering that none of the ladies should accompany us. In the very accident itself, however, we saw and adored the hand of God, as it gave occasion for a public acknowledgment of the merciful interposition of the Most High in our preservation from imminent danger. This was done by the assembled passengers on board the steamboat to which we had passed, the next morning, and an opportunity was thus enjoyed of speaking to a great number (about 200) *the words of this life.* The exercises were conducted by Dr. Edwards (of Boston) and myself. Dr. E. allu-

* Ps. lxxviii., 6, 7.

ded in a very feeling manner to the death of 'that distinguished man who had recently departed,' spoke of the peace and joy of his last moments, and earnestly exhorted them all to 'live the life of the righteous, that they might die his death.' The chairman of the meeting, and many around me, were in tears; the good seed was scattered over a soil softened both by the memory of their own recent deliverance and by general grief for the death of one whom all venerated and loved, and will, I cannot doubt, bring forth fruit to life everlasting. So you see, dear mother, even the mortal remains of our beloved father carry a blessing along with them. After the exercises, Mr. W. V. came to me on the back part of the upper deck, where I was alone, introduced himself to me, and spoke with much affection, and in tears, of the memory of father. 'I shall never forget,' said he, 'his last prayer in my family. I never knew a more heavenly-minded man.' Some, whom I never saw before, from different parts of the country, accosted me with similar expressions. Let us magnify the grace of God, which was in him, dear mother, and be comforted by these proofs, that the virtue of his example and instruction is not ended by his death. We reached Troy about half past one o'clock. A number of relatives and friends had assembled to meet us in

the morning, but as our arrival had been retarded for seven or eight hours, they had mostly dispersed. I must, however, omit particulars just now. We left Troy (J., A., E., and myself) about three o'clock P.M., and reached Salem at three in the morning. Our friends had waited for us till nearly midnight, but had given up expecting us, and gone to bed. We stopped at the hotel, and E. and A. went forward to ascertain the condition of the house. It had been opened and warmed by our kind friends, and the remains were therefore immediately conveyed thither, and left, with proper attendance, till morning. When the two came back, having made these arrangements, E. said everything about and in the house looked as natural, and *like old times*, as if it had just been left by the family (so considerate and thoughtful of our feelings had our dear friends here been). 'And,' said he, 'just as we came out of the front gate, a little bird sprang up and sang so sweetly in the moonlight!' A warm and lovely morning was another smile of a kind providence; but the greatest indulgence I have yet to mention. I had not the least idea that any of us would ever behold his countenance again, and was peculiarly distressed on account of A., to whom I had not mentioned the decision of the undertaker in New-York, who, after having examined

the remains, thought they ought not to be seen again. But when I directed that one friend *alone* should examine them here, what was my surprise and thankfulness, dear mother, to learn that all discoloration had vanished—that not the slightest injury had been received by the removal (notwithstanding the frightful condition of the roads), and that the features were perfectly calm, placid, and natural! J., A., and myself passed about an hour alone with them (in the east parlour), and then gave way to the other relatives. The services of the interment commenced about two. It was found that but a small part of the multitude assembled could get into the house, and it was the general wish that the body should be conveyed to the church. We consented that this should be done after the services had begun at the house. They were begun by the Rev. Mr. Mairs, by singing the last four verses of the 16th Psalm. With mingled sorrow and joy the great assembly united in the words, which, you know, he so much delighted in,

"'Because my soul in grave to dwell
Shall not be left by thee;
Nor wilt thou leave thine Holy One
Corruption to see.

Thou 'wilt me show the path of life;
Of joys there is full store:
Before thy face, at thy right hand,
Are pleasures evermore.'

Prayer was then offered by Mr. Mairs, and the procession moved to the church. The body was placed in the aisle before the pulpit, and an appropriate and eloquent address delivered by Mr. Halley, and prayer by Mr. Lambert. The congregation then passed around, and looked once more on the countenance of their beloved pastor, the coffin having been removed to the door of the church for that purpose, and their groans and tears showed the depth of their unfeigned sorrow. We then proceeded to the graveyard, and laid him in his long repose by the side of his father's tomb. While the solemn ceremony of committing 'ashes to ashes—dust to dust,' was proceeding, a sweet and solemn strain of music arose at a short distance: it was a hymn sung by the choir of Mr. Lambert's church, expressive of the hope, joy, and thanksgiving with which a Christian's death, or, rather, his victory over death, should be contemplated. —There, in the spot which his heart desired, he sleeps in Jesus till the voice of the archangel and the trump of God shall awaken the dead, and 'they that have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life.'

"Yours, dear mother,

"Most affectionately,

"J. P."

"Thus, my dear friend, I have endeavoured to comply with your request. The deepest impressions left on my own mind by the scenes I have described and the character I have attempted to review, were these: the pure glory of a benevolent and heavenly life;—the wisdom and the happiness of unreserved devotedness to Christ;—the divine power of the Christian hope to exalt the soul above the sufferings of the body, and the awful fears which attend our departure from life;—and, on the whole, the truth of the inspired declaration, that 'godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.'

"May the same 'precious faith,' the same glorious and divine hope, be the portion in life and the joy in death of all who may read these pages.

"I am, my dear friend, yours very truly and respectfully, J. PROUDFIT.

"The Rev. Dr. Forsyth."

CONCLUSION.

The preceding letter renders it quite useless to enter into a minute analysis of Dr. Proudfit's character, or to indulge in lengthened reflections upon his career as a man and a minister of Christ. Yet a few concluding words will not be inappropriate. "He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." The secret of his life, of his personal holiness, his unwearied labours to do good to others, is well expressed by Macarius in the brief sentence (on the title-page) from his Homily on keeping the Heart—"the head of every virtue and the source of all good works is constant perseverance in prayer." He was eminently a man of prayer—one who continued instant in prayer, walking closely with his God, and therefore was he honoured to fill up a sphere of activity, and attain a measure of usefulness far beyond anything which mere intellectual abilities or scientific attainments, even though they were of the highest order, could achieve.

The grand desire of Dr. Proudfit's heart was for the power to do good on a large scale. His early and oft-repeated petition was, that the Lord would bestow upon him those gifts and graces which would specially fit him to act well

his part in the age and the country in which his lot was cast; and, certainly, every one who reads with care the records of his life, must own that this prayer was not unanswered. To the town of Salem, where he so long resided as a Christian pastor—to the county of Washington—to the early settlers in Northern and Western New-York—to multitudes in many other quarters of our country, and to the dwellers in other lands, he was in various ways the minister of lasting good.

The history of Dr. Proudfit shows—and this we deem to be one of its most important lessons—how extensive an influence may be acquired, and how large an amount of good may be done, by persons whose position would seem to be not the most favourable for wide-extended usefulness; it proves that this depends much more upon the spirit the minister possesses, than the place in which he is settled. The retired country pastor, while diligently feeding the flock of which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer, at the same time can, if he will, in various ways labour most beneficially for others far beyond the narrow limits of his parish. In saying this, however, we would not be understood as urging the adoption of those precise methods of benevolence which Dr. Proudfit employed, and with such happy success: in the altered circumstan-

ces of the Church and the country, these may not be so needful now, nor promise the same rich results that were produced by them forty years ago. But what we would urge with all earnestness and affection is the cultivation of the principles, the spirit which prompted the venerable subject of this memoir to publish so many tracts and sermons, and to make so many journeys through the wilderness, that he might break to the scattered sheep dwelling in it the bread of everlasting life.

The whole aspect of affairs in the Church of God is, in the present day, widely different from what it was when Dr. Proudfit entered the ministry. Fifty years since, the missionary movements were just beginning; the long-wished-for days when the followers of the Redeemer shall see eye to eye were thought by many to be close at hand; the ancient might and mastery of anti-Christian Rome appeared ready to vanish away: in a word, it seemed as if the first rays of millennial glory were already beaming upon the Church. How changed the scene now! Anti-Christ is fast resuming his former sway over the monarchies of Europe, and even in this land of freedom, the number of his followers, and the power of his influence are increasing with such rapid strides, as to awaken the anxious fears of the Christian patriot; controversies which were

once supposed to have been permanently settled have been revived, and are carried on with a deeper earnestness than ever. We know not what may be in the womb of Providence; but ours are evidently eventful times; well therefore does it become the youthful minister, and all who are looking forward to the sacred office, to study their signs, and to seek with especial earnestness from the Church's Head the gifts and graces that shall fit them for their age, that in the coming day of action it may be said of them, as of the men of Issachar of old, "These have knowledge of the times, and know what Israel ought to do."

THE END.

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